

Irish National Poems



BY IRISH PRIESTS

EDITED BY

• T·D·SULLIVAN •

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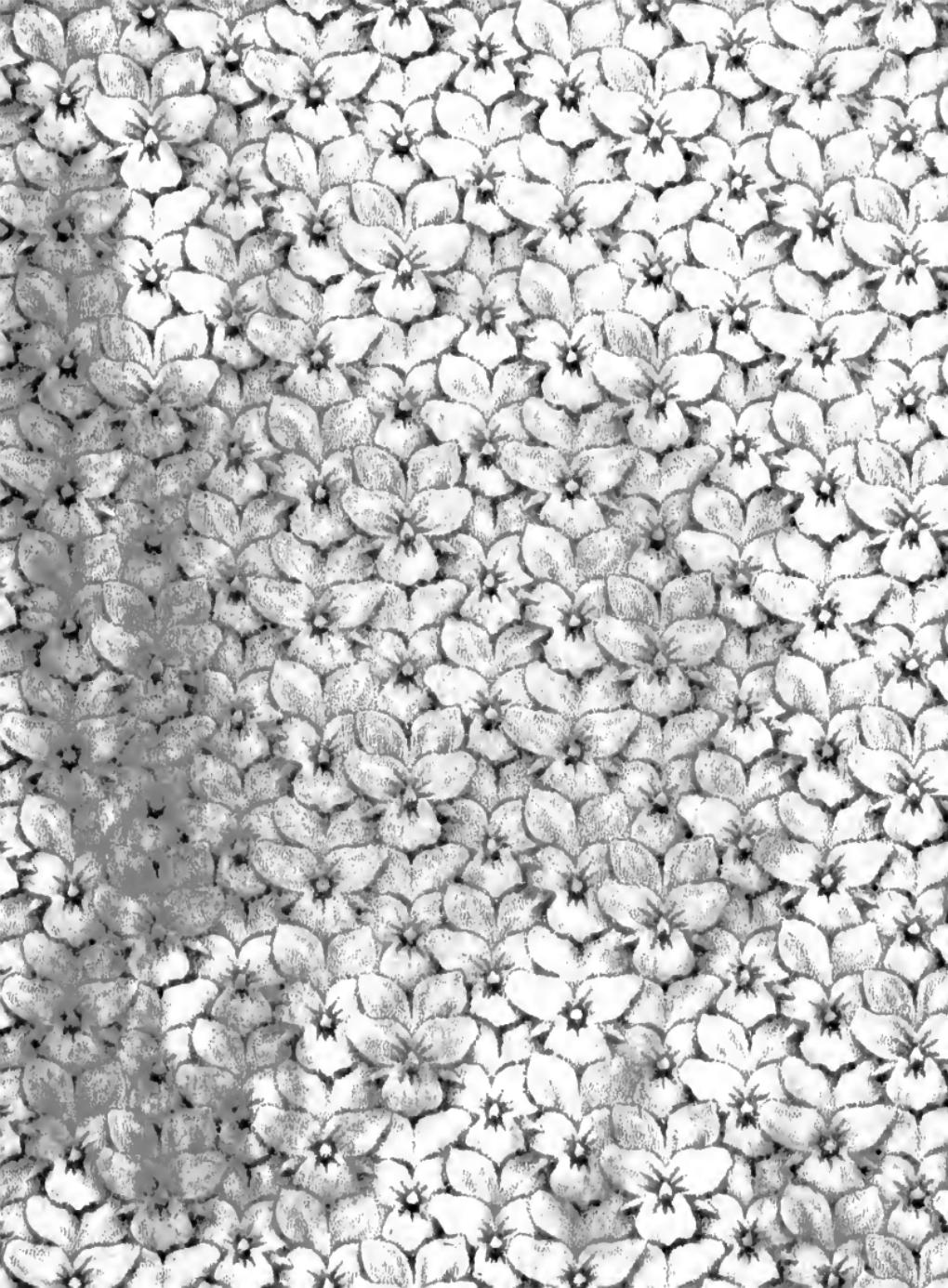


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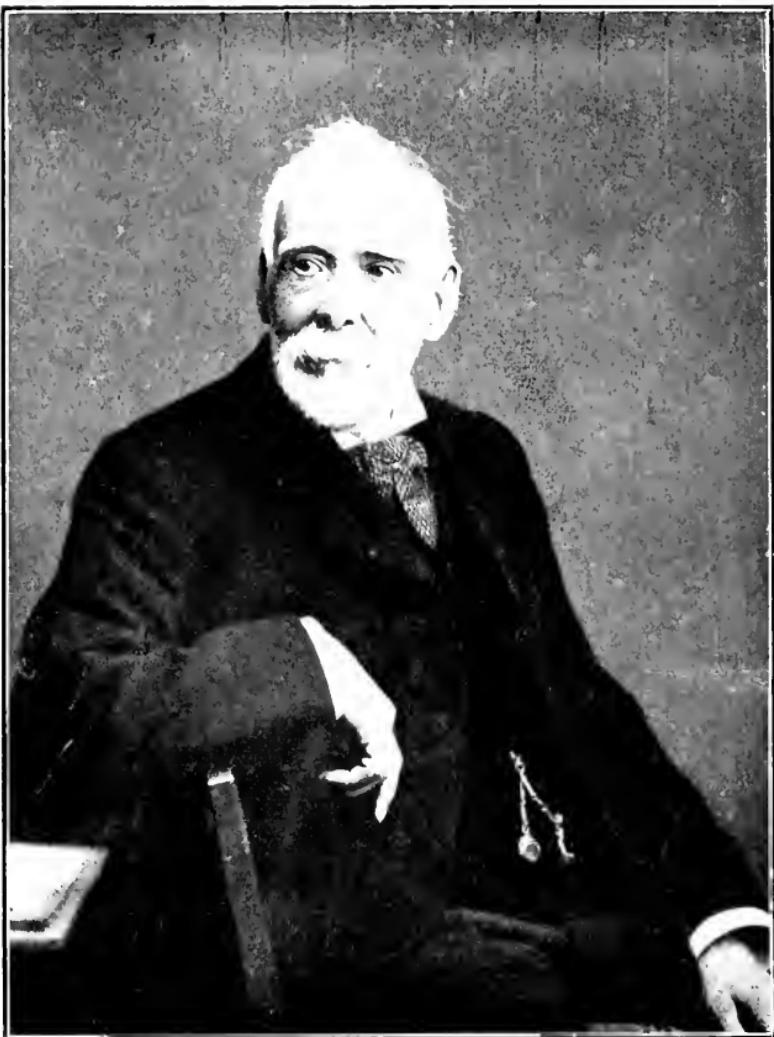
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T. D. SULLIVAN.

Ireland
Miscellanies

IRISH NATIONAL POEMS

By IRISH PRIESTS

Compiled and Edited by

T. D. SULLIVAN



DUBLIN

M. H. GILL & SON, LTD.

1911

ДИЯОЧІЛДІН МІНІ
СІЛДАНА СОЛТА
ЧАЛАЛО

FOREWORD

MANY selections and collections of Irish patriotic poetry have been published in Ireland and America within the past fifty or sixty years. The little volume entitled "The Spirit of the Nation" led the way. It was followed by a long and continually growing line of similar publications, all designed to nourish and stimulate the love of Ireland in Irish hearts. The collection here presented is intended to be one of that honorable company, and to help their work. It has a special character ; it is compiled on a peculiar plan. Its contents are exclusively the compositions of Irish Priests on Irish subjects. None of the devotional poetry of the reverend authors is here included ; most of their religious verses have appeared in Catholic newspapers and magazines—from which could be gathered material for a portly volume of high literary merit and spiritual charm. But Irish Priests were not and could not be indifferent to the political fortunes and material interests of their country, and so it is that we have from their pens the patriotic effusions included in this volume. They cover the whole range of Irish national feeling ; they pay homage to the physical beauty of the land ; they tell

Foreword

of the bravery and chivalrous qualities of the native race ; they bewail the disasters that have befallen them ; they fiercely denounce the oppressors of Ireland, and fondly prophecy for her people a future of triumph and glory. Full certain may we feel that when that brighter time shall arrive no voices will hail it with more glad acclaim than those of the Soggarths aroon—the patriot priests of Ireland.

My field of selection for this anthology has been limited by the conditions above referred to. I have culled only Irish national poems written by Irish Priests. The collection might have been much larger if in former years I had had the forethought to preserve for such use a greater number of the many compositions of that class which came under my notice ; now I can only do my best with the excellent materials still at my hand ; and I give to my countrymen this little volume compiled in the spirit of the fine old Irish phrase—

“*Do cùin gSóipe Dé agur onóra na h-Eireann.*”

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IRISH NATIONAL POEMS

BY IRISH PRIESTS

FAREWELL TO WEXFORD

The following graceful and tender verses were published in the *Wexford People* of September 15th, 1888, from the pen of the Rev. P. F. Kehoe, at present (1911) stationed at Brigetown, Co. Wexford.

Upon the vessel's deck I stand,
And watch the shore recede from view ;
I see the hills and mountains grand,
The distant spires—the skies of blue.
While speeds the goodly ship away
The burning tears come trickling down,
And deep within my heart I say
Farewell—farewell, sweet Wexford town !

Farewell the bright and happy hours,
The sunny days of long ago—
The woods, the glens, the meads, the flowers,
The loving hearts I'll ne'er more know.
Tho' pressed by sickness, toil and care,
And bent beneath misfortune's frown,
I breathe an exile's fondest prayer
For Erin and for Wexford town.

My Testament

On Slaney's banks, at close of day,
Companions of my youth will roam ;
While I must wander far away
From country, friendship, love and home.
No more I'll see the sunbeams light
Her smiling fields or mountains brown ;
With saddened soul I bid good night
To Erin and to Wexford town.

The land lights gleam around the bay,
A haze falls o'er the tranquil sea ;
The shore recedes—it melts away,
And dimmer grows beloved *Sliieve Bui*.
The freshing breeze swells out the sail,
The sun is set—the night comes down—
Adieu, adieu, dear Innisfail !
Farewell, farewell to Wexford town !

MY TESTAMENT

By "Alpha," the Rev. Father Cahill, in the "Nation."
June 18, 1859.

Air—"From this Hour the Pledge is Given."

Oh ! bury me on yon mountain ;
'Tis there I in death would lie ;
Where the music of rill and fountain
Goes murmuring softly by ;

My Testament

The shamrock green above me,
Planted by friendly hand ;
As, next to God, I loved thee,
Dear Erin, my native land !

The Celtic Cross raise o'er me,
And the ivy around it twine—
It will tell to the land that bore me
That the dear old Faith was mine ;
And though fallen and low I found it,
Trampled, and poor, and lone,
My heart grew closer round it,
Like that ivy around the stone.

I have no golden treasures—
I deem them of light avail—
But a Harp, whose mournful measures
Have wept for Innisfail.
And lest some slave should waken
Its strains for the Saxon foe,
Let us both in that hour be taken
And laid in one grave below.

No tears from those who love me,
No chanted elegy :
Let the winds and dews above me
Be the sighs and tears for me.
But if my friends regret me,
When the grass grows on my grave,
That with God they will not forget me
In prayer, is the boon I crave.

Not in Vain

When Banba's chains are broken,
When her sons again are free,
Let some one send the token
And bear the glad news to me.
Oh, I'll burst from death's cold slumbers,
My harp once more will sound,
And we'll strike such thrilling numbers
As will waken the dead around.

NOT IN VAIN

By the Very Rev. Dean Kelly, D.D., Athlone.

Is our country's soul departed ?
Hath her ancient spirit fled ?
Bowed so long and broken-hearted,
Lies she now among the dead ?
Has the high and holy mission
Of the great and good been vain,
Who, to hand the old tradition
Down to us, have reeked no pain ?

No, I will not, cannot think it,
They who for their children's gain
Take the poisoned cup and drink it—
These men never live in vain ;
Not in vain o'er brave O'Donnell
Did the olden banner wave,
Though afar from green Tyrconnell
Wept Nuala o'er his grave.

Not in Vain

Not in vain did Silken Thomas
 Fling the Saxon truncheon down,
Though dark death came o'er the promise
 Of his youth and high renown.
Not in vain did Owen borrow
 All his father's hope again,
Nor the gallant Sarsfield sorrow
 As he died on Landen's plain.

.

With such deeds and men before us
 Can we look and listen on
To the mother's cries who bore us
 For her children dead and gone—
For her best beloved driven
 Through the stranger's lands to roam,
For the links of strong love riven
 Which had bound them to their home ?

Let our cry once more be ONWARD !
 Look we up to heaven like men ;
True and tried are in the vanguard
 To array our ranks again.
And " Speranza's " harp, whose numbers,
 Fired our hearts in days of yore
Wakes our souls from sorrowing slumbers,
 Sounds to cheer us on once more.

Cui Bono

CUI BONO?

By “Fionn Barra” in the “Nation.”

The Rev. James J. Murphy, author of the three following poems, was a young Irish priest who had a remarkable career and met with a tragic fate. A native of the County Wicklow, he displayed while yet a lad abilities of a high order, and was sent by his people for education to the Catholic College of Clonliffe, Dublin. While there he formed the resolution to go on for the priesthood, and thence proceeded to Maynooth to prosecute his ecclesiastical studies. This he did with such success that soon he became one of the professors. In the late sixties he began to send to the *Nation* poems of a very striking character over the signature “Fion Barra”—three of which are here appended. Later contributions took somewhat of a different tone; the mind of the writer was apparently getting unhinged, so much so that one of the editors of the *Nation* wrote him a kindly private letter expressing regret that he appeared to be in some mental trouble, and advising him to be very careful about proceeding to ordination while in that condition of mind. “Fion Barra,” however, took Holy Orders; ere long he resigned them and went to London to make his living as a literary man. He, however, repented of those wanderings and returned to the priesthood, to which he was re-admitted. He was engaged in the delivery of a series of lectures in Canada, when on December 4th, 1875, a fire broke out in the hotel where he was staying in Montreal, and he and a brother priest were burned to ashes.

If all the wrath of England ran
To fill the land with ruin-fires,
If all her bloodiest hounds began
To tear us as they tore our sires :

If every cabin felt the flame,
And all the fields were waste and red,
Till silence o'er our highways came—
Such silence as will bless the dead :

Cui Bono

If blood were spilled in thunder-showers
Where'er the hunted came to bay,
And all the grass and all the flowers
Were stained and sickened day by day :

If once again the maidens cried
To all the hills to hide their heads,
And babes and mothers side by side
Lay butchered in their bloody beds :

If all the love that lit the land
When priests knew well how hunger kills,
Flashed out again when, bruised and banned,
The priests were with us on the hills :

If in the lonely mountain cave
We heard how Jude and Macchabee
Cried God's great curse to smite the slave
Who e'er forgot God made him free :

If all the tears our fathers shed
Came back to us, and all the groans ;
And wives and sons and daughters dead
Lay, with no priest to bless their bones :

All, all were vain to quench the fires
That burn within our veins to-day ;
So help us, God, that helped our sires,
We cannot give the land away !

Vinegar Hill

VINEGAR HILL

By "Fionn Barra."

Oh dear, Father Tom! how you're panting! I'm sorry I
hurried you so,
But my heart was red hot in my bosom to see the old Hill
ere I go,
To stand on its top as I'm standing, the town huddled there
at my feet,
Some eyes I dare say, in its houses that looked on the rebels'
retreat.

Very dark is the green of the grass here, and sullen it shows
to the brutes;
But we know what it's drinking for ever from under the sod
where it shoots.
We know, but not now shall we mention, the flesh and the
blood and the bones
Hidden here since our Wicklow was widowed and Wexford
was glutted with groans!

Do you mind, Father Tom, how around us the land stretches
flatly for miles?
You can see every road winding whitely—no rocks and no
sheltered defiles;
O God! how six brave rifled cannon, rammed home with the
vengeance of years,
Had shattered the skulls of the Saxons till Ireland rang round
with her cheers!

Vinegar Hill

But you see, the poor rebels had pitchforks, and pikes, and a
pistol or two,
And friends from afar had not risen to teach their rude hands
what to do ;
So they came here to die, dimly dreaming the will was as
good as the deed,
And that Ireland will honour her children, who knew not to
fight, but to bleed.

And the poor fellows too were half-starving. They tell of a
thousand or more
Whose food for a week had been turnips—raw turnips and
soft at the core :
Bad stuff in a stomach that's stationed to stand against bayonet
and ball ;
Bad stuff when the heart must be steady, the feet rooted fast
like a wall !

And yet on this hill-top, bare-breasted, bare-armed, and
hungry and weak,
They taught the brave truth which our babies are learning to
think and to speak—
Rang a shout to the hearts of the nations, that lives there for
ever and aye,
How Ireland can fight for her freedom, were some one to
show her the way !

The way ! How the great hearts are withered, the great
muscles lost to the land,
Because the great brain yet is wanting to hold all the nations
in hand,

Vinegar Hill

To bind up its strength in one body, and point out the place
where a blow
Sent straight from the shoulder of Ireland would reach to the
heart of a foe !

Ah no, Father Tom ! I'm no Fenian, but one who must think
now and then
Of the red streams that made Ireland fruitful, poured out
from the hearts of her men :
Of the tears that the women are shedding o'er babes with a
fate such as theirs—
To slave while there's vigour within them, and starve when
they get their grey hairs !

Very right, Father Tom, to speak coolly, had your eyes never
gone to the past—
Had your heart never bled for the thin hands that hold to
your own at the last—
That cling to you just as their owners first feel that God's
mercy is near,
To take them before their mad hunger has eaten His love
and His fear !

Yes, I know all the worth of forbearance ; but still are our
brothers to blame.
Who say that the great God of Patience—and the God of
Revenge are the same ?
Who point to the long, weary ages, crammed fast with the
sighs and the groans.
Wrung out from the bread-begging people, whose masters
have offered them stones ?

Oremus

Let us fling aside cant for the moment, and open our bosoms
to each,

And hear what our hearts ever whisper, despite what our
tongues have to teach.

Ho ! ho ! Father Tom, why, you're blushing—your heart
mutters fiercely and long

That the great law of God and of Nature is war to the knife
against wrong !

Never mind. We'll go down from the hill-top. We've seen
all we wanted to see ;

The rank grass that feeds on our fathers—the fields where
their feet used to be.

Poor fellows ! We don't call them heroes—the land of their
love wasn't Greece :

But we—you and I—give them pardon, and pray that their
souls are at peace.

OREMUS

By “Fionn Barra.”

Years and years our eyes have waited for the coming of
the glory

That would make amends for tortures, pillaged lands and
roofs aflame ;

But the years have brought no comfort—they have added to
our story

Only blurred and blotted pages, darkened with our grief
and shame.

Oremus

We were patient, God! we think it, in the time of tribulation,

Though our hearts had fires within them that the devils understand,

And our vengeance vainly sued us, though we heard the lamentation

Of our starving sons and daughters made a laughter in the land!

Now and then the great desiring for revenge upon our masters

Took our hands and hearts in triumph, turning them to devil's tools;

Well—we know 'twas wrong, and failures and unpitying disasters

Speak to us the mind of Heaven: we admit it, we were fools.

It was better when we flung us in our depth of desolation
On the earth that minded never, under Heaven that did not mind;

Saying, "God! we take in patience this Thy bitter dispensation
We will please Thee with our weeping—we, the beggar men and blind."

Best it was when insult found us, and we hailed it as a blessing.

Taking spit and scoff for mercies, holding hunger for a friend,

Stretching forth our cheeks for smiting, and our mouths for blows, confessing

'Twas the way ordained for Ireland's purifying to the end.

Oremus

Even so we kept us patient, in the mud and mire awaiting
What new modes of good might meet us on the doleful
way we trod ;
We have known the filth of kennels, we have known the
prison grating,
In the land that Nature gave us, fruit and floweret, rock
and sod !

We were laughed at by the nations, but we heeded not the
laughter—
For we knew the greater soul can see and bear it with a
smile,
And the shame within the present drew from out the large
hereafter
A glory and a gladsomeness that lasted for a while.

For a while—for back upon us come the curses of the ages,
Come the curses of our fathers from their violated graves,
Come the curses of our children, whose disgrace will be the
wages
Of our shaming sin that hands to them the heritage of
slaves !

And our hearts, O God ! are human, and are hot besides to
boiling,
And our souls are black and bitter, for our backs are galled
and sore,
And the thought springs up within us that to suffer our
despoiling
Is unworthy, is unrighteous, and is sin for evermore !

Oremus

O dear Lord, look down upon us, on the men who ne'er
denied Thee
When Thy name was made a mock'ry by the men that
mock us now;
On the men who rang Thy praises when our masters still
decried Thee,
And the only crown vouchsafed us was the thorn upon
Thy brow.

Angel-warriors are about Thee, and their swords are ever
sleeping:

Spare us one to strike for Ireland as they struck for Israel—
One to show the doubting nations that our land is in Thy
keeping,
And the rightful cause shall triumph o'er the fraud and
force of hell!

One more chance for dear old Ireland!—one more chance
thou wilt not grudge us—

One to place her flag the foremost in the onward march
of men;

One more chance, and let Thine angels, let the whole world
stand to judge us,

If we make not Saints and Scholars for the universe again!

See us here, a nation praying, at Thy feet, O God! prostrated,
Clinging madly to our Maker, with despairing dying call,
Robbed and slandered by our brethren, hunted evermore
and hated,

Not one friend in all our anguish but the God that knows
it all!

Dirge for Sir Cahir O'Doherty

Lord ! we never yet have doubted of the Great Right Hand
that's o'er us—

Of the heart that ever watches o'er the miseries of men ;
Now we're weak and sad and weary, and the way is dim
before us.

And—Oremus—Lord ! we pray Thee ! be Thou merciful.
Amen.

DIRGE FOR SIR CAHIR O'DOHERTY

By the late Most Rev. Dr. O'Doherty, Bishop of Derry.

Author of a fine volume of Essays and Verses entitled "Derriana,"
published by Gill & Son, in 1902.

Weep, weep, the lost Chieftain, the noble and brave,
Who in youth's early morn has gone down to the grave !
Weep, weep, the young warrior whose prowess has thrown
A glory unfading o'er old Inishowen :
In the battle the bravest, the first in the fight,
His foes trembling fled from his sword flashing bright,
And his tall, waving plume was a terror to all
From the borders of Dublin to dark Donegal !

With Absalom's beauty and Jonathan's grace,
The pride of his clan and the flower of his race,
His eye beamed with love for the sons of the Gael,
But the fire of its wrath made his enemies quail ;
Deceived by false friendship he trusted the foe
Till, lashed into madness by Paulet's fierce blow,
He swore to clear Sassanach lords from the soil
And reign a free chieftain from Swilly to Foyle.

Dirge for Sir Cahir O'Doherty

Chichester had robbed him of land and of fame,
And had vowed to extinguish his clan and his name,
Nor thought he would dare to contend for his own—
But he knew not the Chieftain of old Inishowen !
He rose in his wrath, though his warriors were few,
But just was his cause, and their fealty was true,
And he swept through the north like the hurricane blast,
And scattered his foemen wherever he passed !

In the land where Columba his kinsman was born
He marshalled his hosts in the grey of the morn ;
By Doon's lonely rock he met Wingfield's array,
And hero-like rushed to the deadly affray ;
But the ball of a foeman, unerringly sped,
Pierced the brain of the Chieftain, and Cahir lay dead !
His head, as a trophy of Britain's fell power,
Was spiked by Chichester on cursed Dublin Tower !

The halls of Buncrana are filled with deep gloom,
And Elagh the princely is still as the tomb ;
From the Foyle to the Swilly tears fall thick as rain
For the chief who shall ne'er lead Fiamuin* again
From Burt's lovely castle and Inch by the sea,
From Shroove's sandy shore to the rock of Dunree,
One deep wail of sorrow, like oceans loud moan
Rends the hearts of his clansmen in old Inishowen !

* Fiamuin—the original name of the clan—O'Doherty.

Dirge for Sir Cahir O'Doherty

Accursed be the cold hearts that plotted his fall,
Accursed be Chichester, the blackest of all ;
May no son inherit his ill-gotten store—
A stranger to peace may he be evermore !
From the wild rocks of Malin to Derry's fair hill,
From Buncrana's lone castle to sea-washed Moville,
May his name ne'er be breath'd save with curse or with
groan,
Who shot down the Chieftain of old Inishowen !

Weep, weep the lost Chieftain struck down in his bloom—
In life's early morning consigned to the tomb ;
The noble, the brave, and the hope of our land,
Whose might in the battle no foe could withstand !
He's gone from our eyes when we needed him most.
Gone, whose prowess in war was our stay and our boast,
Gone, the day-star whose brightness we each thought his
own,
Gone, the valiant young Chieftain of old Inishowen !

Without him the sky seems bereft of its sun ;
Singing dirges to ocean the rippling streams run ;
The song birds are silent, joy's spirit has flown,
Night's deep cloud of sorrow enwraps Inishowen.
But his name, unforgotten, in song and in story,
Shall live through the ages, encircled with glory ;
While the hills are reflected in Swilly's blue wave ;
Shall the fame still be cherished of Cahir the brave !

On a Distant View of Derry

ON A DISTANT VIEW OF DERRY

By the late Most Rev. Dr. O'Doherty, Bishop of Derry.

Again I roam the fragrant fields that skirt the Foyle's calm tide
And gaze upon its sparkling waves that seawards proudly glide ;
Again I pluck the humble flowers that deck its winding shore,
And feel anew the bliss with which I gathered them of yore.
Again I feast my eyes upon the hills my boyhood knew—
Unchanged, familiar friends they seem when other friends
are few.

All other streams their charms possess, but none, oh ! none I see
Has half the charm that thou, O Foyle, hast ever had for me.

Once more I climb Ballougly's height and gaze out far and wide

O'er Donegal, o'er green Tyrone and Derry, Ulster's pride.
I see the lands where Cahir reigned tho' rude, yet all his own—
The towering dark and heath-clad hills of rugged Inishowen.

I see the realms O'Donnell swayed, wide-spreading to the West—

The home of many a warlike chief, of saint, and virgin blest :
I see the hills—dim, distant, blue—where once O'Neill was lord,

When English ranks full often fell before his conquering sword.

On a Distant View of Derry

Before me stands in maiden pride the “City on the Hill”—
The gift of Ainmire’s royal son to sainted Columbkille ;
Where Calgach erst the art of War his dauntless heroes taught,
And eager youths the Druids lore within its oak-groves sought.
Where rose, in happier times, the towers of Columb’s blest
abode,
Within whose cloisters, fresh and bright the fire of fervour
glowed ;
Where matin hymn and vesper-psalm re-echoed through the
grove,
And pagan rites gave way to faith and hate was turned to
love.

’Twas there the bloody Norseman’s power was crushed with
slaughter dire,
And widow’d Danish mothers wept fierce Niall and Murchad’s
ire,
And Norway’s daughters looked in vain for those who left
their shore
To plunder Erin, but were doomed to see their homes no
more.

’Twas there died Ardgar’s kingly son, the people’s hope and
pride—
Who ruled from Malin’s rocky coast to Bantry’s angry tide ;
There Munster’s queen, in pilgrim garb resigned her soul to
God,
Well pleased to rest within the soil by Columb’s footsteps
trod.

On a Distant View of Derry

Within those walls fierce Paulet's hand provoked proud
Cahir's ire,
And woke a vengeance glutted soon in streams of blood
and fire ;
Around these walls for weary months besieging hosts were
seen
Assail the gates, closed 'gainst their King by Derry's famed
thirteen ;
But war and famine fled at length—peace reigned within
once more,
And beauty rare in bower and hall rose round fair Faylia's.
shore.
Cathedral towers have risen since then which shame good
Flahbert's pile,
And matin hymn resounds again through cloister, nave, and
aisle.

All hail, then Derry ! early loved, and well-beloved still,
Through time may'st thou stand proud and great, fair " City
on the Hill ! "
Thy schools send forth again such men as erst sought Scotia's
coast,
And made our Isle, throughout the world religion's stay and
boast.

May mitred Fallon's leave thy halls, to win the world from sin,
And patriot prelates grace thy See as nobly as Maginn !
And when my heart's pulsations cease—stopped by death's
icy chill,
Oh ! let me rest beside thy walls fair " City on the Hill ! "

Glandore

GLANDORE

The Very Rev. Patrick A. Murray, D.D., wrote much on religious subjects, mainly in staid and strong prose, but sometimes permitted himself a little excursion into the flowery fields of poetry. He was a distinguished theologian, ready at any moment to give battle to any assailant of the Church, of which he was an able champion. From his pen came the rattling lyric, "A Song for the Pope," which is a favourite with the clergy on festive occasions. The reverend author first had a number of copies printed for private circulation, but requests for others continuing to reach him after that supply had been exhausted, he sent the verses for publication to the *Nation*, in which journal they appeared on the 30th of July, 1859. Under the title was the following line: *Air*—"A Song for the Oak, for the brave old Oak," the words of which are by H. F. Chorley, and the music by E. J. Loder. Dr. Murray's graceful tribute to the beauties of Glandore is indeed well deserved: the place is a miniature Glengariffe. For a time this eminent churchman was President of the College of Maynooth; within its sacred halls he died on November 16th, 1882, at the age of 71 years.

Though I have forsaken long,
Fairy land of tuneful song,
Though my lips forget to tell
Thoughts they once could utter well,
How can I, with heart and tongue,
See unloved, or love unsung,
Scenes like those that rise before
The enchanted eye in sweet Glandore.

Though a high and holy call
Claims my soul and senses all,
Saints might sing a type-like this
Of their own bright realms of bliss;

Glandore

Man may tell in strains of love,
Oh ! how fair the world above,
When such beauty beameth o'er
The heaven below of sweet Glandore !

Cloudless sky and sparkling sea,
Cliff and shore and forest tree,
Glen and stream and mountain blue,
Burst at once upon the view ;
The gay, the beautiful, the grand
Blending over wave and land,
Till the eye can ask no more
Than it hath in sweet Glandore.

But the sunshine on the sea,
And the emerald of the lea,
And the ever smiling skies
Charm not heart, or soul, or eyes,
Like the grasp of friendship's hand,
Like the welcome warm and bland,
As the sunlight gleaming o'er
The happy homes of sweet Glandore.

For the loveliest scenes that e'er
Smiled of heaven the image fair,
Like the beautiful in death,
Have not soul, nor voice, nor breath ;
Oh ! 'tis but the kindly heart
Can to them true life impart,
Tree and flower, and sea and shore,
Thus live and breathe in sweet Glandore.

The Exodus

Time may chill and bow and bind
Glowing heart and chainless mind ;
They droop—the flowers of fancy youth,
Round the ripening fruits of truth.
Yet I feel, while here I stray,
Dawn again youth's sunny day ;
Fancy, with her radiant store,
Comes again in sweet Glandore.

Lovely region of Glandore !
Friends beloved for evermore !
Mid the tranquil bliss I feel
One sad thought begins to steal—
Soon must come the parting day,
And my steps no more will stray,
And my voice be heard no more
Among the scenes of sweet Glandore !

THE EXODUS

By Rev. J. Butler.

The Rev. J. Butler was a frequent contributor to the poetic department of the *Nation*, some forty years ago, over the signature "Eblana."

They are going, they are going, where Missouri's waves are flowing,
Where the waving crops are growing for the tiller of the soil ;
Where the light of Justice beameth, and the sword of Justice gleameth,
And good fortune ever seemeth as attendant upon toil.

The Exodus

Far from Erin they are flying, where their father's bones are
lying,

Where Atlantic's waves are sighing round her desolated
shore;

Where the streams of care are welling round each simple
peasant's dwelling,

And the bravest hearts are swelling with the sorrow at
their core.

There are parents fond, endearing ; there are scenes yet bright
and cheering ;

But an evil star is peering o'er the dwellings of our isle—
O'er the cot amidst the bushes where the shining river rushes,
Where the sparkling fountain gushes like a heart that has
no guile.

They are leaving home forever ; and the fondest kindred sever ;
And the light of joy shall never brightly beam upon their
breast.

Though the freeman's flag is o'er them, and a life of peace
before them,

Yet the mother fond who bore them sighs with sorrow in
the West.

Let them go ! may Heaven speed them ! be a blessed lot
decreed them ;

But if Ireland e'er shall need them, may they hasten o'er
the sea ;

May the loving hearts that slumbered, by the weight of grief
encumbered,

Beat for Erin's woes unnumbered, and return to set her free !

The Ancient Race

THE ANCIENT RACE

*By the Rev. Michael Tormey, D.D., of Westmeath, in the
“Nation” of December 20th, 1851.*

What shall become of the ancient race—
The noble Celtic island race ?
Like cloud on cloud o'er the azure sky,
When winter storms are loud and high,
Their dark ships shadow the ocean's face—
What shall become of the Celtic race ?

What shall befall the ancient race—
The poor, unfriended, faithful race ?
Where ploughman's song made the hamlet ring,
The village vulture flaps his wing ;
The village homes, oh who can trace ?
God of our persecuted race !

What shall befall the ancient race—
Is treason's stigma on their face ?
Be they cowards or traitors ? Go
Ask the shade of England's foe ;
See the gems her crown that grace ;
They tell a tale of the ancient race.

The Ancient Race

They tell a tale of the ancient race—
Of matchless deeds in dangers face—
They speak of Britain's glory fed
On blood of Celt right bravely shed ;
Of India's spoil and Frank's disgrace—
They tell a tale of the ancient race.

Then why cast out the ancient race ?
Grim want dwelt with the ancient race.
And hell-born laws, with prison-jaws,
And greedy lords with tiger maws,
Have swallowed—swallow still apace—
The limbs and the blood of the ancient race

Will no one shield the ancient race ?
They fly their father's burial place ;
The proud lords with the heavy purse—
Their father's shame—their people's curse—
Demons in heart, nobles in face—
They dig a grave for the ancient race.

They dig a grave for the ancient race—
And grudge that grave to the ancient race.
On highway side full oft were seen,
The wild dogs and the vultures keen,
Tug for the limbs and gnaw the face,
Of some starv'd child of the ancient race.

The Ancient Race

What shall befall the ancient race ?—
Shall all forsake their dear birth-place,
Without one struggle strong to keep
The old soil where their fathers sleep !
The dearest land on earth's wide space—
Why leave it so, O ancient race ?

What shall befall the ancient race ?
Light up one hope for the ancient race ;
Oh, Priest of God—Soggarth aroon !
Lead but the way—we'll go full soon ;
Is there a danger we will not face,
To keep old homes for the Irish race ?—

They will not go, the ancient race !
They must not go, the ancient race !
Come, gallant Celts, and take your stand—
The League—the League—will save the land ;
The land of faith, the land of grace,
The land of Erin's ancient race !

They will not go, the ancient race !
They *shall* not go, the ancient race !
The cry swells loud from shore to shore,
From em'rald vale to mountain hoar—
From altar high to market place—
They shall not go, the ancient race.

Erin Awaking

ERIN AWAKING

By Rev. J. D. Walsh, S.J., San Jose, California.

When the foeman snatched from thee each God-given right,
And entombed thee in darkness of Slavery's night,
And on thy fair bosom pressed Tyranny's heel,
While about thee lay shivered thy once trusty steel ;

When he heaped outrage on thee, scorn, insult, and wrong,
Till thy form lay lifeless, and mute was thy tongue ;
Ah ! he thought he had slain thee, that thrice-bitter day,
And that hope had died with thee for ever and aye.

But, no ; though the Saxon well speeded his dart,
Life's pulses lay dormant in the depths of thy heart ;
And now, sweetest Erin ! life throbs through thy veins,
And dawns the bright morning of freedom from chains.

In the full blaze of freedom soon, soon wilt thou stand,
A queen bright and royal in thy own peerless stand,
Then let but thy sunburst to the breeze be unfurled,
And thy sons shall throng round thee from the shores of the
world ;

And of gifts bring the richest—a loyal heart's love—
And pledge thee that fealty before heaven above,
Which gems, howe'er priceless, shall purchase—no, never—
To serve and defend 'gainst thy foemen for ever.

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

And they'll catch in thy accents the song left unsung,
While thy Harp, in cold darkness, slept fettered, unstrung—
Thy warrior's proud glory, who gladly for thee
Fought till death on the red field that thou might'st be free.

Once again wilt thou teach them their sweet Celtic tongue,
That was heard throughout Eire when nations were young ;
And ope founts of Wisdom to their wondering gaze,
That lay locked in the Gaelic—a gem's hidden rays.

Grant this balm, God of Nations ! to our sore-longing heart,
And let this be our cry ere from earth we depart :
“ Till doomsday, dear Erin, be prosperous and free !
Esto perpetua !—a-cushla machree !”

THE PRIESTS OF NINETY-EIGHT.

*By the Very Rev. Canon P. M. Furlong, P.P. of Taghmon,
Co. Wexford.*

The story of our native land, from weary age to age,
Is writ in blood and scalding tears on many a gloomy page ;
But darkest, saddest page of all is that which tells the fate
Of Erin's noblest martyr-sons, the priests of Ninety-Eight.
Leal children of the Church were they, her soldiers brave and
true,
Yet Irish hearts within their breasts were beating warmly too ;
For years of patient, studious toil, of vigil, and of prayer
Had never quenched the patriot fire which God had kindled
there.

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

When sheltered by the stranger's hand among the hills of Spain,
Or where the streams of sunny France roll rapid to the main,
Their fondest thoughts in eager flight, where'er their feet
might roam,

Had sped across the circling seas that girt their island home—
Across the wide and circling seas unto her emerald breast
Had come like weary ocean birds that seek a place of rest,
And back unto the exiles borne in far off foreign clime
Sweet memories of the bygone joys of boyhood's golden time.

And many an eve the stranger's halls re-echoed Erin's songs
That told in fierce or touching strain the story of her wrongs ;
And many a night beneath the stars that lit the Southern skies,
While hotly throbbed their loving hearts and big tears filled
their eyes,

They mourned their country's glories past, her present woe
and shame,

And prayed that brighter glories yet might gather round her
name,

And dreamed of deeds that men might do once more upon her sod,
Embattled in her sacred cause, for freedom and for God.

But now again, their exile o'er they tread their native land,
Among her leaders and her chiefs anointed priests they stand ;
Anointed priests, with priestly charge, and bound by priestly vow,
They owe their isle a double meed of love and duty now.

The love of father for his flock of helpless little ones—

The love a darling mother wins from true and tender sons—
A love that liveth to the end, defying time and fate—

With such a love they love their land, the priests of Ninety-
Eight.

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

And, oh ! how outraged is that love—what bitter pangs they
feel .

To see her trampled ruthlessly beneath the tyrant's heel !

To see her—erst enthroned in might, queen of the Western
wave—

Now wearing on her royal limbs the fetters of a slave ;
Crushed by a thousand cruel wrongs, a prey to myriad woes,
Discrowned, despoiled, the nations' scorn, the scoff of brutal foes.
Who've tracked her steps with hellish hate for many a long year
past,

And joy to think the hour of doom has come to her at last ;

To see the tear-stains on her cheeks, the dust upon her hair,
And o'er her wan and wasted face the wildness of despair,
The light alone unfaded yet that flashes in her eye,
To tell the dauntless soul within that will not, cannot die !
Oh, sight to torture loving eyes that look and long in vain !
Oh, sight to madden faithful hearts with cruel frenzy-pain !
Oh, doleful sight !—a people doomed, a nation's agony,
A land with woe and horror filled from sea to smiling sea !

The gory track of tyranny has all her hills defiled,
And ruin riots o'er the scenes where peace and plenty smiled ;
Her fields lie bare and desolate, her mournful rivers moan
By blackened hearths, and outraged homes, and altars over-
thrown.

Through hall and hamlet, 'mid the wreck the spoiler's hand
has made,

Red Murder in the name of Law pursues his hellish trade,
And day and night the gibbets groan, the deadly bullets rain,
And dusty street and bare hillside are piled with heaps of slain !

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

The good and true and noble fall, or find a living tomb,
Away from home and friend, within the dungeon's lonely gloom,
Or sink beneath the brutal lash or pitch-cap's maddening pang,
The prey of men with tiger heart and worse than tiger fang.
Like hunted wolves the people fly before the hell-hound rage
That sweeps the land from North to South, and spares nor
sex nor age ;
And Britain's boasted banner, with its flaunting fold, outwaves
Above the soil her despot rule has sown with bloody graves !

To heaven in ceaseless dirge ascends the mother's wild despair,
The wail of sorrowing wife and child, the maid's unheeded
prayer,
The voice of vengeful blood, that cries up from the reeking sod—
Ah ! well may ache your Irish hearts, O patient priests of God !
Well may the fire of righteous wrath leap to your watching
eyes !

Well may you vow before the God that rules the earth and skies
No more to preach ignoble peace, no more your hands to hold,
While tyrants waste your land with war and tigers rend your
fold !

They drew the old green banner forth and flung it to the light,
And Wexford heard the rallying cry and gathered in her might,
And swore around uplifted cross until the latest breath
To follow where her soggarths led—to victory or death !
The soggarths led, the pikemen fought like lions brought to bay,
And Wexford proved her prowess well in many a bloody fray,
Where wronged and wronger, foot to foot, in deadly grip
were seen,

And England's hated Red went down before the Irish Green.

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

And bravest of the brave and true that struck for Ireland's right—

The wisest at the council board, the boldest in the fight—
All pure from stain or breath of shame, through storms of strife and hate,

They bore the soggarth's honoured name, the priests of Ninety-Eight.

The sad end came : the cause was lost ; the last faint hope had fled ;

Once more beneath the conqueror's yoke proud Wexford bent her head—

Unaided she had dared his wrath and faced his ranks of steel,
Unaided, though upon her arm had hung the nation's weal.

Unaided ! Ah, that pregnant word of bitterness and pain !

Why slept the valiant of the land while Wexford strove in vain ?

Why rang not out the battle-shout o'er Ireland in that hour

When Wexford flung its manhood's might against the tyrant's power ?

The gallant men that round her flag in patriot pride had stood,
The glow of freedom in their eyes and pulsing in their blood,
Had fought in vain, in vain had struck their last despairing blow,

And died as Irishmen should die—their faces to the foe.

And o'er her soft and swelling vales, spread out by God's right hand

To nurse as brave and bold a race as ever blessed a land,
And o'er her martyr-memoried hills, from Forth to stern Slieve Buie,

Whose names shall shine as beacon lights on Wexford's history.

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

A piteous wail of wild despair ran like a moaning wind—
The wail of widowed, broken hearts whom death had left
behind ;
And shroudless bones in ghastly heaps lay whitening in the sun
To tell the deeds of devilry the tyrant's hand had done !

But, oh ! those priests, those noble priests, how sad a fate was
theirs !

How full the cup of bitterness the All-wise God prepares
For His own chosen ones marked out in suffering and shame
. Anew to consecrate His cause and glorify His name !

Yes, they were soldiers in His cause—the cause of trampled
right—

His cause wherever o'er the world *His* trumpet calls to fight—
His cause, though scorned of slavish men and crushed by despot
heel—

The holiest cause that ever bared a fearless soldier's steel.

Yes, they were martyrs for His name—for Him and His they
died—

Let cowards scoff, and cynics sneer, and mocking foes deride—
For it is written large and deep on many a gore-stained sod,
“Who dieth for God's people he most truly dies for God.”
The shepherds loved the helpless sheep of their dear Master's
fold,

And with their blood they sealed their love as he had done
of old ;

And all the ages that have passed, and all the years to come,
Can show no purer love than theirs, no truer martyrdom

The Priests of Ninety-Eight

And radiant shall their memory live, though dark and sad their doom,

To brighten in our history a page of woe and gloom—

A pillar-fire to guide a nation struggling to be free

Along the thorny, sunless path that leads to liberty.

And whatsoe'er the years may bring, however fortune range,
Yet firmer, fonder shall be knit, through every chance and change,

The sacred ties which Heaven itself with tender care hath wove
To bind to Mother Ireland's heart the soggarth of her love.

And never alien force or fraud that bond shall rend in twain ;
The guile and wile of traitor friends shall menace it in vain ;
Ay, even though by traitorous hands its strength be tried once more,

Firm as the rock, 'twill brave the shock, unbroken as of yore !
O Irish priests ! how proud and grand a heritage is yours !—
A priceless love that will not die as long as time endures—
A precious flower of matchless bloom, whose perfume day by day
Will sweeten every toil and cross that meet you on your way.

Oh ! guard it well against all taint of foul decay and death,
Its holy, hallowed beauty shield from every withering breath,
And fair and stainless hand it down to those who'll follow you,
And love it with an equal love—as generous, fond, and true.
And honour them—the martyred dead—the fearless, good,
and wise—

Who for its sake in evil days made willing sacrifice
Of earthly hope and earthly joy, and dared the felon's fate
To feed it with their own heart's blood—the priests of Ninety-Eight !

The Celtic Tongue

THE CELTIC TONGUE

By the Rev. Michael Mullin.

Father Michael Mullin was a gifted and much-loved priest of the diocese of Galway. He contributed poems of a high order of merit to the *Nation* in the fifties. His most famous composition is his noble plea for "The Celtic Tongue," published in that journal in August, 1854. Its pathos, earnestness, and beauty touched the heart of every reader, and it is not too much to say that it contributed much to keep alive that love of our olden speech which has attained to so happy a development in the present Gaelic League. He departed this life at Chicago in April, 1869, at the early age of 36 years.

'Tis fading, Oh ! 'tis fading ! like leaves upon the trees !
In murmuring tone 'tis dying, like the wail upon the breeze ;
'Tis swiftly disappearing, as footprints on the shore
Where the Barrow, and the Erne, and Lough Swilly's waters
roar—

Where the parting sunbeam kisses Lough Corrib in the West,
And Ocean, like a mother, clasps the Shannon to her breast !
The language of old Erin, of her history and name—
Of her monarchs and her heroes—her glory and her fame—
The sacred shrine where rested, thro' sunshine and thro' gloom,
The spirit of her martyrs, as their bodies in the tomb,
The time-wrought shell where murmured, mid centuries of
wrong,

The secret voice of Freedom, in annal and in song—
Is slowly, surely sinking into silent death at last,
To live but in the memories of those who love the Past.

The Celtic Tongue

The olden tongue is sinking like a patriarch to rest,
Whose youth beheld the Tyrian on our Irish coasts a guest ;
Ere the Roman or the Saxon, the Norman or the Dane,
Had first set foot in Britain, over trampled heaps of slain ;
Whose manhood saw the Druid rite at forest-tree and rock—
And savage tribes of Britain round the shrines of Zernebock ;
And for generations witnessed all the glories of the Gael,
Since our Celtic sires sung war-songs round the sacred fires of
Baal ;

The tongues that saw its infancy are ranked among the dead,
And from their graves have risen those now spoken in their stead.
The glories of old Erin with her liberty have gone,
Yet their halo linger'd round her, while the Gaelic speech
lived on ;

For mid the desert of her woe, a monument more vast
Than all her pillar-towers, it stood—that old Tongue of the Past.

'Tis leaving, and for ever, the soil that gave it birth,
Soon—very soon, its moving tones shall ne'er be heard on earth,
O'er the island dimly fading, as a circle o'er the wave—
Receding, as its people lisp the language of the slave,
And with it too seem fading, as sunset into night
The scattered rays of liberty that lingered in its light,
For Ah ! tho' long, with filial love, it clung to motherland,
And Irishmen were Irish still, in language, heart and hand,
T'instal its Saxon rival, proscribed it soon became,
And Irishmen are Irish now in nothing but in name ;
The Saxon chain our rights and tongues alike doth hold in thrall,
Save where amid the Connaught wilds and hills of Donegal—
And by the shores of Munster, like the broad Atlantic blast,
The olden language lingers yet, and binds us to the Past.

The Celtic Tongue

Thro' cold neglect 'tis dying now ; a stranger on our shore !
No Tara's hall re-echoes to its music as of yore—
No Lawrence fires the Celtic clans round leagured Athaclee—
No Shannon wafts from Limerick's towers their war-songs to
the sea.

Ah ! magic Tongue, that round us wove its spells so soft and
dear !

Ah ! pleasant Tongue, whose murmurs were as music to the ear !
Ah ! glorious Tongue, whose accents could each Celtic heart
enthral !

Ah ! rushing Tongue, that sounded like the swollen torrent's
fall !

The Tongue, that in the Senate was lightning flashing bright—
Whose echo in the battle was the thunder in its might !

That Tongue, which once in chieftain's hall poured loud the
minstrel lay

As chieftain, serf, or minstrel old is silent there to-day !

That Tongue whose shout dismayed the foe at Kong and
Mullaghmast

Like those who nobly perished there, is numbered with the
Past !

The Celtic Tongue is passing, and we stand coldly by—
Without a pang within the heart, a tear within the eye—
Without one pulse for Freedom stirred, one effort made to save
The Language of our Fathers from dark oblivion's grave !
Oh, Erin, vain your efforts—your prayers for Freedom's crown,
Whilst offered in the language of the foe that clove it down ;
Be sure that tyrants ever, with an art from darkness sprung,
Would make the conquered nation slaves alike in limb and
tongue ;

The Sister of Mercy

Russia's great Czar ne'er stood secure o'er Poland's shatter'd frame,
Until he trampled from her heart the tongue that bore her name.
Oh ! Irishmen, be Irish still ! stand for the dear old tongue
Which as ivy to a ruin, to your native land has clung !
Oh ! snatch this relic from the wreck ! the only and the last,
And cherish in your heart of hearts the language of the Past !

THE SISTER OF MERCY

*By the Rev. Michael Mullin, in the "Nation" of
May 17th, 1862.*

The Order of "Sisters of Mercy" is an Irish institution. It has branches in nearly all parts of the English-speaking world. It was founded in Dublin by a pious lady, Mrs. Catherine McAuley, in 1831, when the Catholics of Ireland were just emerging from the squalor and the sufferings imposed upon them by the penal laws, its objects being the promotion of "all works of mercy, corporal and spiritual, especially education." Its good works are beyond human counting or appraisement. Many grateful hearts have sung its praises. The following poem from the pen of the Rev. Michael Mullin, author of "The Celtic Tongue," is entitled to a place in this collection.

On the verge of the town, at the end of a street
Where the roads from the country like travellers meet,
She dwells in a convent so peacefully sweet,
That aye to my fancy it seems to look down,
With a mild warning face, on the ways of the town.

The Sister of Mercy

To see her at morn, as the orient ray
Announces to night the near presence of day ;
As she kneels at the altar in silence and pray'r
With hands meekly joined and with reverent air,
You would think her a statute fixed motionless there.

The school is the kingdom she rules in by day ;
Her throne is a desk slightly raised from the ground ;
Her subjects—a ring of young faces around ;
So light is her sceptre, so gentle her sway,
In her kingdom no rebel hath ever been found,
For, fashioned of mildness and wielded with grace,
Her sceptre's the smile, or the frown of her face.
As the clear waters mirror each cloudlet that stirs,
So those young faces mirror the changes on hers—
If she frown, how they melt into sadness and tears—
If she smile, how the sunlight on them reappears ?

But behold her at eve in that garden, whose wall
Bounds a world for her in its circuit so small
As she bends o'er the flowers that spring from its sod
To illume with their beauty the altars of God,
What an emblem, complete in its grace and its truth
Of her life—as she bends o'er the green soil of youth,
And the first flowers of virtue implants in the mind,
Which they fill with a fragrance nev'r wholly resigned :
Till transplanted from earth after life's blighting even,
They bloom on for aye in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Sister of Mercy

In summer and winter, in sunshine and storm,
You often may witness her thin-muffled form,
Like an angel repairing to each wretched place
Where the demon of sickness and want leaves his trace.
By how many a bedside of sin and despair,
Through her means, has the standard of hope been unfurl'd,
And how many a spirit left desolate there
Has she taught to look down like a prince on the world !

As she passed us one day, cried an old withered dame :
“ Ah ! well I remember the time she first came—
’Twas the day after that my poor husband had died,
And was taken a corpse from the bed by my side—
She came with a smile to the side of that bed,
And laid her soft hand on my hot, fever'd head,
While the children around it were screaming for bread.
Kind friend of the friendless ! Thy shadow did fall
More brightly than sun on my poor cabin wall ! ”
Yes ! Sister of Mercy ! and handmaid of love !
Sweet angel of comfort from Heaven above !
Aye, bearing glad tidings from door unto door,
Aye, bearing fresh hope, as the white breasted dove
Bore the green branch of peace o'er the deluge of yore.
And thus ’twixt the school and the poor man's abode
Lies the oft-trodden course of her heavenward road.

As the year in his flight over the earth doth reveal
The week-days, the spokes in his fast flashing wheel,
Each bright spoke that passes the convent-wall by
Is read by the nun with a mystical eye.

The Sister of Mercy

For she sees thereon graven in characters quaint
The name of some Angel or favourite Saint,
And she thinks on his life in the calm of her cell—
How he lived, how he died, how he fought, how he fell.
In the ne'er-ceasing fight 'gainst the powers of Hell—
How his glory is great from the East to the West,
How he shines like a star in the land of the blest !
And she longs in the struggle to stand by his side,
To live as he lived, and to die as he died.

And thus does the stream of her life flow along
With an echo like murmur of Heaven's own song,
And its clear bosom mirrors each glory-robed star
That sheds down its light from the heavens afar.
O life, without tincture of sin or alloy,
Of aught that is selfish thy peace to destroy,
O life, which the vot'ries who bask for an hour
In the beam of the world's painted fashion and show,
Often seek, when the glare which allured them is o'er,
And the idol they worshipped is prostrate and low !

Sweet Convent of Mercy ! bright isle of the blest,
Where life's troubled waves sink in silence to rest ;
Or if in mad fury around thee they roar,
They break into foam on thy wall-girded shore.
Sweet Garden of Eden ! where 'mid the chaste bowers
Ever blossom the purest and holiest flowers !
Where the nun's open heart's like a censer on fire
With the flame of one noble, heroic desire—
To devote all her efforts of body and mind
For the Glory of God and the good of her kind !

The Bards of Old

THE BARDS OF OLD

By the Rev. James Keegan.

Of this patriot priest and poet the following notice is given in "Connolly's Collection of Irish Poetry":—"The Rev. James Keegan, at the present time (1887) attached to St. Malachi's Church, St. Louis, Mo., was born in the parish of Cloon, County Leitrim, in January, 1860. He was educated in Carlow College, and ordained a priest in May, 1883. Nearly all the poems he has written are on Irish themes."

Those olden bards, those glorious bards who sang in the distant times—

They stir me like a trumpet blast—their wild melodious rhymes ;
In those old strains, o'er Erin's plains the Fenian legions march,
And still their living deeds are blazed on song's triumphal arch.
I see the stern unconquered Fionn, that thunderbolt in fight,
Pursue from Tara's princely bowers young Grainne's love lit flight ;

The milk white stag on Lene's clear strand her northward swift career ;

Deep-mouthed Bran, the matchless hound and Osgar's magic spear ;

The chase, the strife, the free, gay life—which dragon men and beast ;

The games they played, the works they made—the rich and joyful feast ;

That was the life—'twas life indeed ; those were the glorious times—

When men wrought deeds well worthy song and bards sang deathless rhymes.

The Bards of Old

The olden bards, those glorious bards who reigned when earth
was young—

When Love and Beauty fired their muse—how sweet the songs
they sung !

They're living still, shall live for aye, those queens and ladies
bright

Who sat enthroned in the world of song like stars in summer's
night.

There Nias, the maid of golden curls, still curbs her snow-white
steed—

She whose soft eyes and jewelled hand are warrior minstrels'
meed ;

O'er Muma's sea in twilight bower swan-bosomed Cliona
reigns,

And Deirdre's fate still wakes the tear in Ulad's lonely
plains ;

Sublime were the lays of the olden bards, and sweet the songs
they sung ;

And though the world grows old and hoar, their strains are
ever young.

Those olden bards, those glorious bards, they sang of land
and sea—

The stars that roll through changeless paths like winds that
rove so free ;

A pœan of joy to Sol they poured to Luna a gladsome hymn—
An ode to the light of day so bright, a *rann* to the dark night
dim.

They looked to the sky with raptured eye—they dreamed of
the restless main,

And evermore to the flowery earth they chanted the mystic strain.

The Gaelic Tongue

By the winding streams they loved to stray, or far among forests green,
And oft at gloaming's tranquil hour in lonesome raths were seen.
Their words were of hope to the sons of men, of praise to God on high—
Their songs were of beauty that ne'er grows old, of virtue that ne'er shall die.
O honour those olden, glorious bards, honour their deathless songs!—
But for them, mayhap, e'en hope had despaired in the night of our darksome wrongs!

THE GAELIC TONGUE

By the Rev. P. S. Dinneen, M.A.

The Rev. Father Dinneen is not widely known as a poet, but the following piece is one of several that give evidence of his capacity to win a high place in the domain of poetry if he chose to devote more of his time and attention thereto. But what he best loves is to labour for the resuscitation and promotion of the Irish language. He is the compiler of a copious, and in every way, admirable Irish dictionary, and has edited collections of Gaelic poetry which, but for him, might have died out of popular memory. Long may he live!

Hail! ancient and beloved Tongue!
The shouts of Caoilte and of Finn
Amid the Pagan battle-din,
Thy thund'rous challenge far out-flung!

The Gaelic Tongue

Cuchulin by the Bloody Ford,
In Gaelic strong defiance spoke ;
The western hosts before him broke,
Nor dared the flashing of his sword !

Dread Conn who braved " a hundred fights "
When through the field his clansmen surged,
With biting taunts the foemen scourged,
And won his realm unchallenged rights.

And soft and sad the plaint of woe
When fell lone Deirdre's tears like rain
For Naisi and his brothers slain—
Three comely brothers, cold and low !

Dear holy Tongue ! When Patrick spoke
The Druid chantings died away ;
Like clouds before the blaze of day
The gloomy night of Error broke !

On famed Clontarf, the Viking-Dane
Faced Brian's ranks with courage high,
But hark ! that wild Dalcassian cry !
And lo ! the field is piled with slain.

Tongue of the Gael ! thine accents true,
O'Neill's proud spirit struck to fire ;
The Bard's fierce themes to vengeance dire
Roused the hot temper of Red Hugh !

Looking Out for the Spaniards

And shall the “ Bearla,” harsh and slow
Thy sweet tones banish from our isle ?

Thro’ mystic mound and storied pile
The winds of Erin thunder, “ No ! ”

Where breakers lash the Western coast,
White foaming billows loud proclaim
The olden tongue’s undying fame ;
“ Mananaan’s steeds ” their lineage boast !

The fairy host, by glen and hill
Weird rhymings croon at midnight hour
By haunted rath and war-worn tower
Lost melodies are echoing still.

Tongue of the Warrior and Priest
Long flourish thou among the Gael !
Thy glorious accents never fail,
Till time and tide alike have ceased !

LOOKING OUT FOR THE SPANIARDS

By the Rev. Patrick S. Dinneen.

Sorrow darkens Desmond’s valleys, sorrow muffles Desmond’s hills,
Sorrow’s voice in plaintive cadence sounds through Desmond’s thousand rills ;
For the spoiler’s hand has cursed her, from the Galtees to the sea,
Where all shattered and dismantled smokes in ruins proud Dunbuidhe.

Looking Out for the Spaniards

Ah, has every hope departed ? Why those watchers on the hill ?
From grey dawn to evening's shadows they are looking sea-
ward still.

From grey dawn to evening's shadows they are gazing on the
main,
Watching for the stately galleys and the Olive flag of Spain.

A hundred suns arise in splendour, and illumine many a bay ;
A hundred suns parch vale and meadow neath their fierce
meridian ray ;

A hundred suns sink down in sorrow, slowly setting in the west ;
Oh, the weary, weary watching on the wind swept mountain
crest.

Loud the breakers roar on Beara, sweet the foam on Sceilg
smiles,

And old ocean laves in amber Scariff's base, and Dursey's isles ;
Shrill the screaming of the eagles that from cliff and head-
land rise,

But no distant Spanish galleys greet those watchers' weary eyes.

Ah, poor Erin's heart is throbbing as her life-blood daily
flows,

As her ranks are thinned by famine, as the Saxon's courage
grows ;

Throbbing for the promised succour from the faithful crown
of Spain,

Throbbing to renew the contest, but it throbs, alas, in vain.

Hugh O'Donnell to His Army

Little dreams the good King Philip, as he feasts in lofty hall,
Of the thousand nameless sorrows that on hapless Erin fall,
Of the earnest prayers and longings that to God on high are sent,
From hearths where sobbing childhood cowers, with parents' blood besprent.

One by one her proudest Chieftains sink beneath the Saxon yoke,
Faint and fainter grow war's thunders, that on famed Black-water broke ;

Traitors dog the friendless heroes that to lift her banner dare,
God ! To watch a nation's spirit slowly settling in despair.

Sick at heart unfriended Erin turns her from the mocking wave,

Turns to see her children drooping—all the land become a grave ;

She must bear alone her torments—must the wine-press tread alone,

Christ who trod that way before her will avenge her every groan !

HUGH O'DONNELL TO HIS ARMY

The following fine ballad, representing an address of Red Hugh O'Donnell to his army before one of his battles, is from the pen of the Most Rev. Dr. Healy, the present Archbishop of Tuam.

Brother chiefs, and clansmen loyal, tried in many a bloody fray ;

God be thanked, these robber Saxons come to meet us here to-day—

Hugh O'Donnell to His Army

Boasting Clifford, Essex' minion, swears he'll make the rebels flee—

We will give them hearty greeting like to that at Ashanee.

What though traitor Celts oppose us, be their numbers three to one !

Greater glory to Clan Connell when this tough day's work is done.
Shrived at Holy Mass this morning; danger we may fearless dare;
For we draw the sword of justice, shielded all in faith and prayer.

Not for conquest or for vengeance on this blessed Lady Day ;
Not in strength or numbers trusting, do we face their proud array ;

But for Holy Mary's honour, by their tainted lips defiled ;
For the sacred rights of freedom, for the mother, maid, and child.

Prone and bleeding lies our country, sorrow clouds her crownless brow ;

All the lines of peerless beauty limned in ghastly colours now.
In the light of glories olden, beaming through our dark disgrace—

See the maddening wrongs and insults heaped upon our fallen race !

Roofless homestead, broken altar, slaughtered priest, dishonoured maid—

Children of an outraged mother ! whet ye well the thirsty blade !

Scorning rock and brushwood cover, rush like swooping eagles forth ;

Hard and home push every pike-head, sinewy spearmen of the North !

Hugh O'Donnell to His Army

Cleave in twain the lustful Saxon, tame Dunkellin's soaring pride ;
Smite the double-souled O'Conors—traitors false to every side.
Down upon them, Banagh's chieftain ! sweep their ranks your spears before,
As the north wind sweeps the stubble through the gap of Barnesmore,
Forward ! forward ! brave M'Dermott strike for fair Moylurg's domain,
For yon lake in beauty sleeping for the holy Island's fane !
Strike and drive the swinish Saxon, herding in their sacred shade,
Far from Boyle's old abbey cloisters, where your fathers' bones are laid.

Holy Virgin, we implore thee, by that abbey's rifled shrine,
Colmcille of Doire Calgach, patron of O'Donnell's line,
Good St. Francis, for the honour of thy name in Donegal,
Speed ye now, Tyrconnell's onset, till we rout them one and all !
Should O'Donnell fall in combat—if the foe be forced to yield,
Better death I never wished for than to die upon the field,
Where the cause of Erin triumphed, and the Saxon was laid low,
With that green flag floating o'er me, and my face against the foe.
Never chieftain of Clan Dalgaigh to th' invader bowed the knee ;
By the black years of my bondage, it shall ne'er be done by me !
I would rather angry ocean roared o'er castle, cot, and hall,
Than see any Saxon *bodach* rule in royal Donegal.

Erin's Flag

Deathless fame in song and story will enshroud the men who died,
Fighting God's and Freedom's battle bravely by O'Donnell's
side.

Great will be his meed of glory, honoured long the victor's name ;
Pointing proudly to her kinsman, many a maid will tell his fame.
" Lo ! he fought at Doonaveragh," aged men will whispering say,
And make way before the altar for the heroes of to-day,
Gleaming bright through dark'ning ages will this great day's
memory glide,

Like the Samier's bright-waved waters glancing onward to
the tide.

ERIN'S FLAG

By Father Ryan

(Supposed to be recited in the Camp of the Irish Brigade).

The Rev. Abram Joseph Ryan is said to have been born in Limerick in or about 1840, but taken by his parents to America while yet a child. Another account gives Norfolk, Virginia, as his birthplace. Nearly all his poems are of a religious character. He was by nature of a serious disposition, and circumstances in his life history tended to deepen the sombre tone of his mind. At the time of the American civil war he was a convinced supporter of the Southern cause, and wrote several stirring songs in its favour. A younger brother of his was killed in one of its earlier battles. The poet-priest died at Louisville, Kentucky, in April, 1886. The following is perhaps his most spirited poem.

Unrol Erin's flag ! fling its folds to the breeze !
Let it float o'er the land, let it flash o'er the seas ;
Lift it out of the dust—let it wave as of yore,
When the chiefs with their clans stood around it and swore

Erin's Flag

That never—no!—never, while God gave them life,
And they had an arm and a sword for the strife,
That never!—no!—never, that Banner would yield
As long as the heart of a Celt was its shield—
While the hand of a Celt had a weapon to wield,
And his last drop of blood was unshed on the field.

Lift it up! wave it high!—it is as bright as of old!
Not a stain on its Green, not a blot on its Gold,
Though the woes and the wrongs of three hundred long years
Have drenched Erin's sunburst with blood and with tears;
Though the clouds of oppression enshroud it in gloom,
And around it the thunders of tyranny boom.
Look aloft! look aloft! lo the clouds drifting by!
There's a gleam through the gloom, there's a light in the sky.
'Tis the sunburst resplendent—far, flashing on high!
Erin's dark night is waning, her day-dawn is nigh!

Lift it up! lift it up! the old banner of green
The blood of its sons has but brightened its sheen!
What though the tyrant has trampled it down?
Are its folds not emblazoned with deeds of renown?
What though for ages it droops in the dust?
Shall it droop thus for ever? No! no! God is just!
Take it up! take it up from the tyrant's foul tread,
Let him tear the green flag—we will snatch its last shred,
And beneath it we'll bleed as our forefathers bled,
And we'll vow by the dust in the graves of our dead,
And we'll swear by the blood which the Briton has shed,
And we'll vow by the wrecks which through Erin he spread,

Erin's Flag

And we'll swear by the thousands who, famished, unfed,
Died down in the ditches—wild howling for bread,
And we'll vow by our heroes, whose spirits have fled,
And we'll swear by the bones of each coffinless bed,
That we'll battle the Briton through danger and dread—
That we'll cling to the cause which we glory to wed,
Till the gleam of our steel and the shock of our lead
Shall prove to our foe that we meant what we said—
That we'll lift up the Green and we'll tear down the Red.

Lift up the green flag ! oh ! it wants to go home ;
Full long has its lot been to wander and roam ;
It has followed the fate of its sons o'er the world,
But its folds, like their hopes, are not faded or furled ;
Like a weary-winged bird, to the East and the West
It has flitted and fled—but it never shall rest,
Till, pluming its pinions, it sweeps o'er the main,
And speeds to the shores of its old home again,
Where its fetterless folds, o'er each mountain and plain,
Shall wave with a glory that never shall wane.

Take it up ! take it up ! bear it back from afar—
That banner must blaze 'mid the lightnings of war ;
Lay your hands on its folds, lift your gaze to the sky,
And swear that you'll bear it triumphant or die ;
And shout to the clans, scattered far o'er the earth,
To join in the march to the land of their birth ;
And wherever the exiles, 'neath heaven's broad dome,
Have been fated to suffer, to sorrow, and roam,
They'll bound on the sea, and away o'er the foam
They'll march to the music of “ Home, sweet home ! ”

The Beautiful Rivers

THE BEAUTIFUL RIVERS

By the Rev. Abram J. Ryan.

Oh, I'll sing to-night of a fairyland, in the lap of the ocean set,
And of all the lands I've travelled o'er 'tis the loveliest I have met;
Where the willows weep and the roses sleep, and the balmy breezes blow,
In the dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful rivers flow.

But oh, alas ! how can I sing ?—'tis an exile breathes the strain,
And the dear old land of my youthful love I may never see again ;
And the very joys that fill my breast must ever change to woe,
For that dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful rivers flow.

But I'll sing of the lonely old churchyards, where our fathers' bones are laid—
Where the cloisters stand, those ruins grand that our tyrant foes have made ;

The Beautiful Rivers

And I'll strike the harp with a mournful touch till the glistening
tears will flow

For that dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful
rivers flow.

And I'll sing of Emmet's lonely fate, and of Emmet's lonely
grave—

Of his early doom and his youthful bloom and his spirit more
than brave;

And ah ! how blest and calm his rest, tho' his grave be cold
and low,

In that dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful
rivers flow.

And I sing of Tone and the Geraldine, Lord Edward true
and blest—

They won the crown—the martyr's crown—and they sleep in
the shade and rest;

In heavenly mould their names enrolled—they died in man-
hood's glow

For that dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful
rivers flow.

And I'll sing of Ireland's ancient days, when sires were kingly
men,

Who led the chase and the manly race thro' forest, field and
glen ;

Whose only word was the shining sword—whose pen was a
patriot's blow

For that dear old land, that sweet old land, where the beautiful
rivers flow.

The Valley of Beare

THE VALLEY OF BEARE

By the Rev. D. O'Crowley.

Father O'Crowley is an Irish priest on the mission in California, where he is esteemed as a cleric and honoured as a literary man. His natal place was Castletown Berehaven, Co. Cork. In 1889 there was published in San Francisco, for a charitable purpose, a handsome volume entitled "A Chaplet of Verse, by California Catholic Writers," in which are included three of Father O'Crowley's poems, one of which is the following affectionate tribute to the charms of his native place.

When fanned by the halcyon breezes
That down from the Indian Isles
Career over Caribbean waters,
Where summer eternally smiles,
I've dreamt of thee, sweet sunny Erin,
And oft times away o'er the foam
In spirit I lovingly wandered
The haunts of my boyhood—my home ;
For, oh there is naught in the tropics
In beauty with thee can compare,
Loved land of the bard and the "brehon"—
Sweet mountain-girt Valley of Beare.

Away where the calm Sacramento
Rolls down over nuggets of gold,
And thousands of freeman are herding
Their flocks upon mountain and wold,

The Valley of Beare

I've sauntered when twilight was brooding,
And sipped the delicious perfume
Of oranges, limes and bananas,
And trellised vines fair in their bloom ;
But oh, than the fair Occidental,
There is one land I cherish more dear—
'Tis the sweet happy home of my boyhood,
The Mountain-girt Valley of Beare.

I've roamed thro' the Yosemite Valley,
And gazed with excessive delight
On torrents that there, 'neath the sunshine,
Leap down inaccessible height ;
I've climbed the Sierra's proud summits,
And basked in the sunshine and glow
Of a beautiful, calm, Indian summer
By the waters of lonely Tahoe ;
But oh ! to my eye thou art fairest
Of all the fair climes of the sphere,
To my heart thou art nearest and dearest—
Sweet Mountain-girt Valley of Beare.

When the day-gods' last lustre is gilding
The slopes of the grand Golden State—
And the modern Argonaut's fleet ships
Come home through the famed Golden Gate,
I stray o'er the New El Dorado—
The land of the free and the blest,

An Exile's Prayer

And sigh for that Emerald Island
That gems the Atlantic's white crest ;
For fate, so relentless and cruel
Doth cause me to linger still here,
And pine for my home by the ocean—
The Mountain-girt Valley of Beare.

AN EXILE'S PRAYER

By the Rev. Denis O'Crowley.

Though I have won an honor'd name,
True friends and wealth galore ;
A free-born people's proud acclaim
On this bright alien shore,
I feel the sadness of my lot—
An exile far away—
And pine for thee, my native spot,
Upon St. Patrick's Day.

Oh, for an hour, this hallowed morn,
'Mid Erin's pleasant vales,
I'd give this fruitful western land,
Its gold and tropic gales ;
My life I'd gladly give to see
In war-like vast array
Thy patriot sons 'neath Em'rald folds
Upon St. Patrick's Day.

An Exile's Prayer

I love the Union's starry flag ;
 Have sealed it with my blood,
When, on the slopes of Malvern Hill,
 Our Irish legions stood ;
But when the hurtling bullets flew,
 Where surged the deadly fray,
I pray'd to strike, my land, for thee
 On some St. Patrick's Day.

Great "God of Armies," thou dost see
 How hapless Erin stands :
Her friends divided and as weak
 As uncemented sands !
Send her a leader to unite
 Her sons, and crush for aye,
All foreign power within her shores,
 Upon St. Patrick's Day.

Grant, also, this request to me :
 That when I come to die,
My spirit may ascend to Thee,
 Through Munster's glorious sky ;
And that these bones be laid to rest
 With their ancestral clay,
In that Green Isle, by Freedom blest,
 Upon St. Patrick's Day.

“A Preface”

“A PREFACE”

The Rev. M. J. MacHale, a nephew of the illustrious “John, Archbishop of Tuam,” was a frequent contributor of poetry to the Irish National Journals in the 'seventies. A collection of his compositions, under the title of “Songs for Freedom, and other Poems,” was published by Messrs. Gill & Son, in 1880, with the following “preface” from the author :—

Here have I gathered together
The songs of the fugitive years,
Some sung 'mid the wild mountain heather,
Some strung in the rainbow of tears.
Some chanted in leisure from duty—
From holiest work I had done—
When the sunlight was strong with its beauty,
Or the evening was faint with its sun.

If they stir but one soul, and awaken
One throb in a slumbering nerve :
If they help but one heart overtaken
By woes that it does not deserve.
If they add but one gleam to the glory
The land of my love should behold,
They are sweeter to me than all story—
They are dearer to me than all gold.

The Land League

For this land that we love with its splendour,
 This land of our holiest love,
With its burden of sorrow so tender,
 With its hope in the Heavens above,
This land needs some song in its sorrow—
 Some chant that may say—
Thou hast passed through the night-sea, Gomorrah,
 Look aloft ! It is day !

THE LAND LEAGUE

By the Rev. M. J. MacHale.

Oh ! plant your banner 'gainst the wind,
 Till every breeze shall shake each fold,
Till every exile of our kind
 Your scroll emblazoned may behold :
God's right for every Irishman !
 Fair-play for every God-sent grace !
Their lands and hearths for Irish hearts,
 And Freedom for the Irish race !

Oh ! rally round this Irish League,
 Oh ! men of Ireland, take your stand
Despite of force and false intrigue,
 And plant the people in the Land.

The Land League

Too long we bore the tyrant's lash,
 Too long our bitter hearts' blood ran,
But forward ! when our masses dash,
 We'll show men yet what lies in man !
Too long befooled, in error schooled,
 We still have snatched some breathing-space ;
Our wakened shout shall yet ring out
 The freedom of this Irish race !

O God ! to think how famine graves
 Were all our valiant fathers knew !
Their latest gasps were groans of slaves
 That choked the winds that hourly blew !
With all their toil upon this soil,
 They starved, alas ! and starved apace—
One million men, by mount and glen,
 Nor saw the freedom of their race.

And now the skies are black with gloom,
 And now the land is filled with pain,
And tyrants stretch a hand of doom
 To slay us with the brand of Cain !
Will we, as they, our brothers slay ?—
 For so it forms a kindred case ;
Oh, no ! but strike out lightning-like
 For freedom for this Irish race !

When the West Wind Blows

Hurrah ! poor serfs, the dawn is near !
Lift up your long-bent brows to God ;
Stand straight before Him ; do not fear,
And ask Him save this shamrock sod !
We bent and bore as ne'er before
A people bent on earth's wide face ;
And now we claim for evermore
The freedom of this Irish race !

Then rally round this Irish league,
Oh ! men of Ireland, take your stand,
Despite of force and false intrigue,
And plant the People in the Land !

WHEN THE WEST WIND BLOWS

By the Rev. J. B. Dollard, "Sliav-na-mon."

An Irish priest, for many years on the mission in America ; author of many songs and ballads expressive of affectionate remembrance of the old land, which are favourites with Irish people on both sides of the Atlantic.

I'm leavin' of Kilronan,
And I'm goin' ten mile away
To the back of Nephin Mountain
Where the gentle rivers play.
I must fly the wicked ocean
That has caused me woe of woes,
For its cryin' waves they rack me
When the West Wind blows.

When the West Wind Blows

'Tis the torture of a mother,
When the treasured ones are lost,
An' she sees the bitter water
Where their cold limbs are tossed !
Oh, black the hour they sailed away,
The angry clouds arose—
An' their bed is cold and troubled
Where the West Wind blows !

I heard the banshee wailin'
An' woke in heavy fright ;
I said : " My Neil and Moran,
Oh, go not out to-night,
For I heard the banshee cryin',
Where the haunted hazel grows,
An' tis evil sound her keenin'
When the West Wind blows ! "

My gold-haired Moran kissed me,
(Oh, bleeding heart so sore)—
" 'Tis back we'll be at mornin'
With a brimming boat galore,
'Tis home we'll come at mornin'
When the full tide flows."
Ah ! his words are with me ever
When the West Wind blows !

Killaiden

I'm leavin' of Kilronan,
An' the ocean's wicked waves,
My keenest woe that never
 I may kneel above their graves,
But I'll pray to God, our Father,
 He will grant their souls repose,
He will ease my bitter sorrow,
 While the West Wind blows !

KILLAIDEN

By the Rev. J. B. Dollard.

It's here in ould Killaiden that I'd joyful live forever,
Though I've been here eighty summers, I'm not wairy of
 it yet,
An' the little white-washed cabin I'll be laivin' of it never,
For its like the world over you might seek and never get !
The people do be sayin' foreign lands are grand to see,
 The busy streets o' London an' the bridges o' New York ;
What a fool they think ould Shemus !—sure the fairies come
 to me
And show me sights an' wondhers that make nothin' o'
 their Talk !

Up here in ould Killaiden sure it's me that has the view !
 The five broad counties I can see on any day at all :
Kilkenny, Carlow, Watherford, Tipprary's mountains blue !
An' Wexford, where, in Ninety-Eight, the Sassenach got a
 fall !

Those Abbey Walls

Now whisper till I tell ye—where in all the world over
Would you see the fields so pleasant, or the heather bloom
so sweet?
And where could ye be baitin' the grand smell of gorse and
clover,
Or the singin' o' the lark that laives the shamrocks at your
feet?

Och, the silly folks that wandher, and go off beyant the
wather,
Sure to hear 'em comin' home you'd think them millionaires
or jooks!
But I tell them "I'm no omadhaun to heed your empty
blather,
And Killaiden's beauty bothers all was ever put in books."

THOSE ABBEY WALLS

By the Rev. Joseph Fitzgerald.

A priest of the diocese of Meath, who, over the initials of his name, contributed much verse to Irish Catholic and National publications in the interval—1843 to 1856. He died in February, 1856, at the age of 63 years.

Behold those abbey walls so gray,
Oh ! where's yon turret's chime ?—
Songs of the blessed ! where are they ?—
That swelled in olden time.

Those Abbey Walls

Where are those hallowed choirs at even ?—
That matin music, where ?—
Those songs, that once were sung to heaven,
Now angels sing them there.

The sunlight of departing eve,
The moonbeam glancing through
The broken arches, teach to grieve,
For hearts long broken, too.
As o'er yon broken casement hangs,
That wreath the ivy makes,
Thus round the heart shall memory's pangs,
Cling dearer, while it breaks.

The green tree o'er thy altar bends,
The long grass sweeps thy wall,
Deeply her sigh the midnight sends,
Along thy chancel hall :
Of sainted memories, calm, and bright,
No legend needs to tell,
For story's pen must fail to write,
What ruin paints so well.

A Legend of Holy-Cross Abbey

A LEGEND OF HOLY-CROSS ABBEY

THE "CULDEE" VISION.

By the Very Rev. Canon John O'Hanlon, P.P.

The Very Rev. Canon John O'Hanlon, author of many works on Irish historical and Catholic subjects, was born at Stradbally, Queen's County, in 1821, and educated chiefly at Carlow College and other leading schools of the locality. As the youth grew up he manifested a decided vocation for the Church, and also a strong literary tendency. His health not being strong he went for a change to America, where he still pursued his ecclesiastical studies, and devoted portion of his time to the production of a class of literature likely to be serviceable to the poor Irish immigrants who were then swarming into the States. In 1847 he had the happiness of being ordained by Archbishop Kennoch at St. Louis. In 1853 he returned to Ireland, where he received a parochial appointment from His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin. One of the works which came from his pen at that time was a versified rendering of a number of our old Irish legends, in a volume which he entitled "Legend Lays of Ireland. By Lageniensis." Of these the following is one :—

When mellowed hues at evening's close spread o'er the distant meadows,
And on Slieve Felim's mountain top the sunlight fades from view,
When furtive creeps the gathering haze of mystic wreathed shadows,
Like diamonds shine the earlier stars that spangle heaven's blue.

A Legend of Holy-Cross Abbey

Oft may the pensive wanderer, beside each moulded arch
That props the ruined abbey walls, with buttresses so
grey,
List to the magic prelude notes, as forth in solemn march,
Long trains of spectral churchmen move unseen, at close
of day.

The massive turret stands as yet, where ravens find their
home,
And ivy clings around its walls, the river murmurs by ;
The nave—though roofless—screens a choir, not alterless
become,
Amidst tall trees the lightest breeze most musical doth
sigh :
When swells that choral anthem, with tower-bells loud
pealing,
Sweet *carrilons* adown the vales slow lingering chime and
last,
Then may the mind, through fancy's maze, touch every chord
of feeling,
And bring from olden times remote some echoes of the
past.

Man hath a mission of his own, and at a distant time
Must yet redeem the rapine made upon this noble fane.
One whose broad lands and golden hoard may fittingly
combine
To rescue from their ruined state those fragments that
remain,

A Legend of Holy-Cross Abbey

Shall feel inspired to raise again a pent-roof o'er those aisles,
And rest the spandril joists against the gables' pointed walls ;
Again the pattering Crumal rain may drip adown the tiles,
And sunbeams pass through coloured glass, o'er richly
fashioned stalls.

Then, once again, the Culdee strain shall rise at early morning ;
The Matin strophe and antistrophe, the Lauds with psalm
and hymn,

Shall roll in cadence grand and sweet from floor to oak-ribbed
awning ;

At intervals of forenoon shall the chapter hours begin.
Then surpliced *freres*, in ordered ranks, at evening shall entone
Their vesper song and complin psalm, when sinks the setting
sun.

And while the pendant midnight lamp lights aisles so dim
and lone,

Their eyes shall close, in blest repose, toil, prayer and vigil
done.

Whilst song and prayer, in upper air, as if from Angel bands,
Pour down in holiest harmonies rejoicings of the blest,
A grand refrain, must wake again, o'er wide and fertile lands,
Strains plaintive, slow and solemn, whilst the sons of labour
rest.

But like that dazzling brightness, when the sheeted lightnings
glance

Athwart the midnight gloom, but with mild effulgent gleam,
The distant canopy illumed, while 'midst the light advance
Those monks of yore, unseen before, now clear as noontide
beam.

A Legend of Holy-Cross Abbey

Around the concave vault of blue, stars paling with adightness
 Of rays celestial, halos crown those habitants of bliss ;
And years may speed the course of time, ere visions of such
 brightness
Will cease to pour from spirit world its glorious sheen on
 this.
Until the patron lord shall reach his span of life decreed,
 And Heaven recalls the pilgrim to that brighter, better
 goal,
Which cares foreclose, ambitious aims, when happily succeed
 Those fadeless joys, saints raptured deem true pleasures of
 the soul.

One summer night, in robes of white, whilst mortals still
 repose,
That Culdee train of spirits blest shall throng around his
 grave ;
And heard again, one requiem strain, such tones for ever close
 From upper air to human ears. Yet still within the nave,
The aisles and choir, so well restored, so loved and cherished
 long,
In cloistered life, to distant age, those brethren of that
 school,
At stated times shall sweetly chant their mass and sacred
 song,
Regarding well their chastening vows, their rubric and their
 rule.

[“Legend Lays of Ireland.” By Lageniensis. Published by
John Mullany, Dublin. 1870.]
The Legends number 24.

The Wanderer's Home

THE WANDERER'S HOME

By the Rev. Patrick Cronin.

In the fine volume of modern Irish poetry collected and edited by Mr. Daniel Connolly, and published by him in New York in 1887, is given a biographical notice of the author of this poem, from which I take the following particulars : "Priest, poet, and journalist are combined in the Rev. Patrick Cronin, who was born near the village of Adare, County Cork, Ireland, in March, 1837. . . . Since 1874 he has edited the Buffalo (N.Y.) *Catholic Union and Times*. . . . Passionately devoted to the land of his birth, Father Cronin has been active and zealous in every American movement promotive of its best interests. He enjoys a merited reputation as an orator, and he possesses the poetic gift in a high degree, but the duties of priest and journalist have prevented its full cultivation."

The river beneath me is flowing
To its grave in the solemn sea,
And the winds and the mists are blowing ;
Yet my feverish cheek is glowing
With burning thoughts of thee, my home—
With burning thoughts of thee.

All wearied around me are sleeping,
But my heart all slumbers flee :
For I think of a willow weeping,
And the dead that are silent keeping,
My sorrowing tears at parting
My early home from thee.

Do You Remember

The roses are long ago withered
That I plucked there by the sea,
But the love of my soul forever
Flows on like this ceaseless river,
As deep and strong, for thee, my home,
My Island Home, for thee.

DO YOU REMEMBER ?

By Rev. M. Lane, Queensland, Australia.

The land whereon you saw the light of day,
Though far away, oh, exile from the clay
That wraps the dust of those beloved, say—
Do you remember ?

The land for which your fathers fought and bled,
The land for which the blood of patriots shed
To shield a nation's life would dye it red.
Do you remember ?

The land of saint and martyr for the cause,
The heart held dear when conscience sang applause ;
The well-tried land that braved the penal laws—
Do you remember ?

The Prayer for Eire

The land where stands the old ancestral home
From which the exiled heart can never roam,
The hundred ties of flesh and blood and bone.

Do you remember ?

The childhood days—oh, visions of the past,
Of happy hours that fled away so fast,
Of hearts whose love till death will surely last—
Do you remember ?

The mother's love, the father's anxious face,
The singing wail—ah, what could e'er efface,
The last fond kiss, the loving last embrace ?

Do you remember ?

THE PRAYER FOR EIRE

By the Very Rev. Dean Kelly, D.D., M.R.I.A., Athlone.

The reverend author of the subjoined poem was a frequent contributor of patriotic poetry to the *Nation* in years gone by, when an ecclesiastical student at Maynooth. Quite recently he has had them re-issued in book form by Sealy, Bryers and Walker, a very commendable proceeding, as they were much too good to be lost. He has prefixed the following brief preface :—

"The following verses were published in college days in the *Nation*, over the signatures of Coman and J. J. K., and copied into many Irish-American, Canadian, and Australian newspapers. Some of them appeared in A. M. Sullivan's *Irish Penny Readings*. Old friends and class-fellows have urged me, from time to time, to collect them into a little book, a request with which I at length comply. It is to be feared that the favourable memories of youthfu

The Prayer for Eire

enthusiasm will not be justified by the experience of maturer years. As to publication, however, the MS. was submitted to one of the most accomplished and finished prose writers, and sweetest and most graceful poets of our time, who wrote :—‘With regard to the poems, if you have an opportunity of publishing them, you ought by all means to do so. Too much sweet and national poetry could not be put forth to keep the old fire of faith and love alive in our country. Too many of our country people are growing more cold and English as time goes on. All who have a voice or a pen ought to utter something in the good old strain of Patriotism to inspire the young.’”

Like the murmuring of the bees,
Or the waving of the trees,
As the gently wooing breeze
Playeth sweet amid the leaves
In the golden summer eves,
Or when yellow, dead, and sear,
In the waning of the year,

They lie along the ground :

Like the slowly ebbing tide,
When in rocky nooks 'twould hide,
As if wishing still to bide
By our Eire's lovely side :
Like the waving wings on high
Of the wild birds, as they fly—
So upon my listening ear,
Soft, and still, and sweet to hear,
Unnumbered voices sound.

In the deep mid-summer time
You have heard the trembling chime
Of bells that from afar off float ;
You have heard the flute's soft note

The Prayer for Eire

Drifting o'er the sleeping sea ;
Sitting thinking dreamily
Unto you the busy hum
Of the city's voice has come,
Sweetened, mellowed as the chime
Of the lays of olden time

Adrift on time's stream.

So those voices round me throng,
Biding with me oft and long,
Many dulcet harmonies,
Brooding softly on the breeze
As the sea-gulls o'er the seas,
Forming one harmonious song,
Which, amid the dark, deep wrong
Of this land of love and truth,
Many a bruised heart may soothe

As a Sabbath evening's dream.

Swell these strains from many lands ,
Breathed from mountains, valleys, strands ;
Where the mighty mountains rise,
And the great lakes mirror skies,
And the giant rivers stream ;
Where the " Southern Cross " doth gleam,
And unwearied Celtic bands
Tread Pacific's golden sands ;
From Canadian backwoods lone,
From the dismal frigid zone ;
From old lands of chivalry
Where the olive still blooms free ;

The Prayer for Eire

From the lily's vine-clad hills,
Many a voice for Eire thrills,
From the hoary-headed sire,
From the youth with manhood's fire,
From the maid in beauty wreathed,
From the child, whose prayer is breathed
From beside a mother's knee,
Rise their love-songs deep and free,
Land of blight and bloom, for thee—
Mingle poet, soldier, sage,
Childhood's rose with snow of age.
And the burden of these strains,
Floating over seas and plains,
Is a prayer that God above,
In His wisdom and His love,
Would dispel the dark'ning cloud
That our Country doth enshroud,
And obstructs His glorious smile
From illumining our isle

With its brilliant, radiant light.

That His rainbow He would show
Through those weary clouds of woe—
The bright promise that once more
Olden Eire, as of yore,
Shall be great and free again,
“ Isle of Saints and learned men,”
While her stalwart sons stand free,
As the breakers of the sea,
When in majesty they roar
Round the rock-engirdled shore,

Foaming proudly in their might.

Down by the Dodder

DOWN BY THE DODDER

By the Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J.

The name of the Rev. Matthew Russell, S.J., is known and affectionately regarded wherever there are Irish people in the world as that of a saintly priest and an indefatigable writer and editor of Catholic literature in prose and verse. More than eighteen years ago he started his *Irish Monthly* magazine, which has since gone on without collapse or check of any kind, and is now as vigorous and attractive as ever. His poetry, of which he has written much, is mostly of the devotional order. He does not touch political subjects, but a lively playfulness and pleasant humour are present in some of his compositions as may be seen in the following piece, which, inasmuch as it has relation to Irish scenes, comes within the scope of this compilation:—

Nature I love in all her moods,
But I more oft have sought her
Where on the silence of green woods
Breaks in the rush of water.
The noise of streamlets' ceaseless flow
Has soothed my spirit ever—
Blank seems fair nature's fairest show
Without some gleaming river.

Had I to own a grand estate
(The notion makes me shiver),
For these three things I'd stipulate—
A lake, a hill, a river.

Down by the Dodder

Your dull, flat woody parks may be
Baronialler and broader ;
A glen for me 'twixt hills and sea
With a live stream like Dodder.

Too long have I thy neighbour been,
Dear stream, without exploring
Thy course amid the meadows green,
Thy purling and thy roaring ;
For thou, too, placid stream, hast roared,
While in wild wintry weather
Thou hast thy mountain torrent poured
Between the crags and heather.

Thy mountain cradle's far away.
Thy race is run ; and mine is
Nearer perhaps—ah ! who can say
How near ? unto its finis—
And so from life's loud dusty road
A somewhat jaded plodder
I steal to this serene abode
And thee, suburban Dodder.

I leave thee. Shall it be for aye,
A river's long forever ?
“ I will return,” we often say,
And yet return, ah ! never,

Down by the Dodder

Well, on life's road, through dust or flowers
A not less useful plodder
I'll be, please God, for these calm hours—
Spent on the banks of Dodder.

I lean me on this orchard wall,
And sniff the pears and cherries—
Each shrub and tree, both great and small—
Stoops 'neath its load of berries.
That redbreast thieving yonder, see !
Poor innocent marauder,
The Seventh Commandment binds not thee
A-robbin' near the Dodder.

And now one seaward ramble meets
A rustic, quaint and still town,
Which you must spell with double l—
God bless it, dear old Milltown !
Yet here, even here one likes to dine :
Rich scenery's poor fodder
For poet going up the Rhine,
Or going down the Dodder.

My song must cease, but thine goes on ;
Thy musical, meek murmur
Broke nature's silence ages gone—
Thy voice has but grown firmer.
In shade and shine, grave, gay, sing on,
And scoop thy channel broader ;
From dawn to dark, from dark to dawn—
Flow on, sing on, O Dodder !

Boyhood's Years

Flow on ! Poor Moore once warbled here
 “ Flow on, thou shining river ! ”
Thy race is run, the sea is near,
 My muse grows sad—forgive her.
And as we've strewn upon thy banks,
 Our very softest sawder
Flash back thy sunniest smile in thanks
 Upon thy Laureate Dodder !

BOYHOOD'S YEARS

By the Rev. C. P. Meehan.

The services of Father Meehan to his country's literature were many and valuable. His historical works are verily a treasure to the Irish race. They include “The Rise and Fall of the Irish Franciscan Monasteries,” “The Fate and Fortunes of O'Neill and O'Donnell,” a “History of the Confederation of Kilkenny,” “The Geraldines”—a translation from the Italian, &c. He was a frequent visitor to the *Nation* office, and an occasional contributor of interesting letters and articles to the literary columns of the paper. He did not write much verse, but the appended piece from his pen has become an established popular favourite : —

Ah ! why should I recall them—the gay, the joyous years,
Ere hope was cross'd or pleasure dimm'd by sorrow and by tears ?
Or why should memory love to trace youth's glad and sunlit
way
When those who made its charms so sweet are gather'd to
decay ?

Boyhood's Years

The summer's sun shall come again to brighten hill and bower—

The teeming earth its fragrance bring beneath the balmy shower;

But all in vain will mem'ry strive, in vain we shed our tears—
They're gone away and can't return—the friends of boyhood's years.

Ah! why then wake my sorrow, and bid me now count o'er
The vanished friends so dearly prized—the days to come no more—

The happy days of childhood, when no guile our bosoms knew,
Nor reck'd we of the pleasures that with each moment flew?
'Tis all in vain to weep for them—the past a dream appears,
And where are they—the lov'd, the young, the friends of boyhood's years?

Go seek them in the cold churchyard—they long have stol'n to rest,

But do not weep, for their young cheeks by woe were ne'er oppressed;

Life's sun for them in splendour set—no cloud came o'er the ray

That lit them from this gloomy world upon their joyous way.
No tears about their graves be shed—but sweetest flowers be flung—

The fittest off'ring thou canst make to hearts that perish young—

To hearts this world has never torn with racking hopes and fears:

For bless'd are they who pass away in boyhood's happy years.

The Lost Home

THE LOST HOME

By the Rev. J. Butler

Come, sit, my son, beneath the shade where autumn winds
are sighing ;
The shadows, creeping down the woods, announce that day
is dying ;
And far the murky clouds outspread—the floating flags of
warning—
Where Alleghanies' giant hills were seen at early morning.

Behold ! my son, the fertile fields where golden grain is
swelling ;
And far away the crested pines thy brother's axe is felling ;
And yonder see our cheerful cot beside the mountain river—
Thy father knows no master here but God, the mighty Giver !

In other days, when life was young, and hope was beaming
o'er me,
I loved my father's humble cot—I loved the Isle that bore me,
And love it still—the dear old Land—though ocean's waves
divide us ;
The thoughts of old and fancy's spell shall bring its shores
beside us.

O land of sorrows, Inisfail ! the saddest, still the fairest !
Though ever fruitful are thy fields—though green the garb
thou wearest,

The Lost Home

In vain thy children seek thy gifts, and fondly gather round thee ;
They live as strangers 'mid thy vales since dark oppression
bound thee.

My own old home beside the Glen !—how could I cease to
love thee ?

The yellow thatch was o'er thy walls, the beeches were above
thee.

Thy sides were like the sea-gulls' wings of purest snowy
whiteness ;

They wooed the sun till round thy porch he flung his golden
brightness.

Methinks I now behold thy smoke ascend from yonder thicket,
Methinks I see my aged sire beside thy open wicket,
And hear my brothers' notes of mirth along the valleys ringing,
Where maidens o'er the milking-pails their rural songs are singing.

Around thy hearth, at day's decline arose the voice of
gladness ;

The fleeting years, as on they sped, flung in no seeds of
sadness ;

And though the swelling tide of care oft rolled its waves
beside us,

We clung in hope around our home—no perils could
divide us.

But ah ! on sudden, Famine's breath brought direful desolation ;
While tyrants cast their cruel laws around the dying nation,
And spurned the wasting, withered poor for help, for mercy
crying,

And smiled with cruel joy to hear that Erin's sons were dying.

The Lost Home

My God ! it came—the fearful gale ! against our happy dwelling—
We stood the fearful shock awhile, though waves of care were swelling ;
While, like a monster 'mid the deep which loves the tempest's thunder,
The lords who owned our land desired to see us sinking under.

In vain the hopes we fed awhile—in vain each dear endeavour !
My father's father's natal home was lost to us forever.
And cosy roof, and porch and walls were cast to earth together,
And we, in woe, were forced to face the winter's direful weather.

Alanna ! 'neath their native soil my parents' hearts are sleeping
Across their lonely grassy graves the shamrock leaves are creeping ;
And we are here amid these wilds, where tyrants ne'er can bind us,
With lands as fertile—not so fair—as those we left behind us.

Yes, true my son !—thy father dear has drunk the bitter potion ;
Yet often mid these lonely woods he thinks, with fond emotion,
That yonder billows seek our Isle—that gentle zephyrs fan her ;
Oh ! may her exiles seek her too, to raise her drooping banner.

The Bells of Shandon

THE BELLS OF SHANDON

The author of this famous lyric was, "as everybody knows," the learned and witty priest, Father Francis Sylvester Mahony, of Cork, whose literary pleasantries over the name of "Father Prout" afforded much amusement to the cultured folk of his time. He gave up the later years of his life entirely to journalism, contributing to various magazines and newspapers articles of great brilliancy, which were afterwards republished in book form. His death took place in Paris in May, 1866, but his remains rest in his native Cork within sound of the Shandon bells he loved so well.

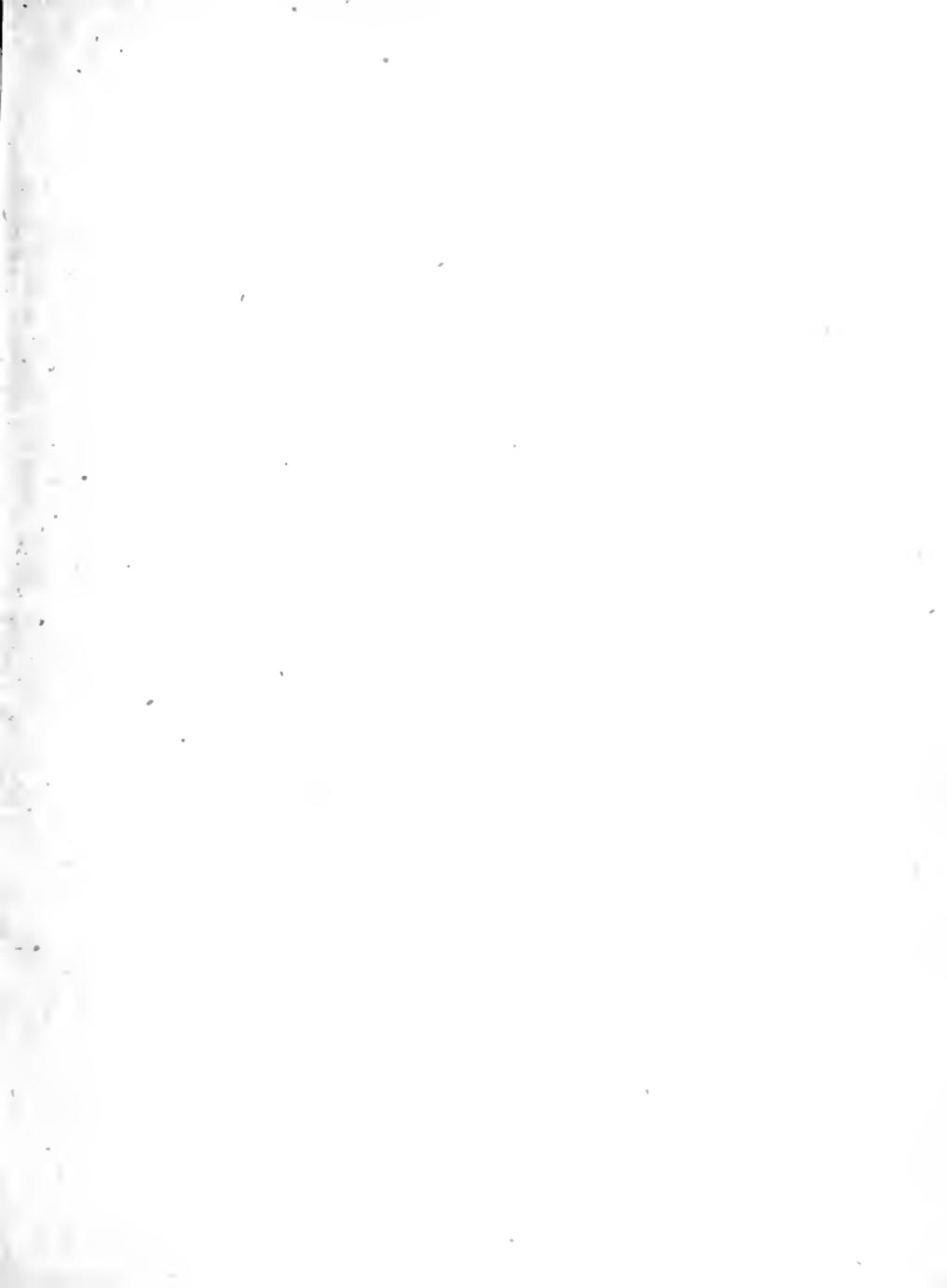
With deep affection and recollection
I often think of those Shandon bells,
Whose sound so wild, would, in days of childhood,
Fling round my cradle their magic spells.
On this I ponder, where e'er I wander,
And thus grow fonder, sweet Cork of thee ;
With thy bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee.

I've heard bells chiming full many a clime in,
Tolling sublime in cathedral shrine ;
While at a glibe rate brass tongues would vibrate,
But all their music spoke not like thine :
For memory dwelling on each proud swelling
Of thy belfry knelling its bold notes free,
Made the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee.

The Bells of Shandon

I've heard bells tolling "old Adrian's Mole" in,
Their thunder rolling from the Vatican,
And cymbals glorious swinging uproarious
In the gorgeous turrets of Notre Dame.
But thy sounds were sweeter than the dome of Peter
Flings o'er the Tiber, pealing solemnly.
O ! the bells of Shandon
Sound far more grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee.

There's a bell in Moscow, while on tower and kiosko,
In St. Sophia the Turkman gets,
And loud in air, calls men to prayer
From the tapering summit of tall minarets.
Such empty phantom I freely grant them ;
But there's an anthem more dear to me,
"Tis the bells of Shandon,
That sound so grand on
The pleasant waters of the River Lee.



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